Government
BUSINESS PLAN
FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2003-2004

Province of Nova Scotia

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Message from Premier John Hamm

I am pleased to present Nova Scotia's Government Business Plan for the fiscal year 2003–2004.

This government's vision is a healthy, prosperous, and self-sufficient Nova Scotia. Sound business planning ensures that we use our resources to best advantage to reach our destination.

In this fiscal year, we are putting the province's future in the hands of Nova Scotians by putting more money in your pockets: by lowering taxes, we are giving you an opportunity to help the province grow.

We're directing increased health funding to important projects like recruiting and retaining health professionals, reducing wait times, supporting seniors, and providing services in communities. The new Office of Health Promotion will guide us toward a healthier future.

We're increasing our investments in our classrooms, our universities, and our community college to give our children and all Nova Scotians the best possible chance to succeed.

We're working with our federal, municipal, not-for-profit, and private-sector partners to provide infrastructure that puts families on the road to self-sufficiency, keeps our communities strong and healthy, fuels our economic growth, and helps protect our environment.

As a government, we have kept our word to the people of Nova Scotia. We've improved access to health-care services, balanced the budget and accounted for our progress, invested in new growth and jobs, ensured that the education system supports students to achieve, and been open and straightforward with Nova Scotians.

We've taken a measured approach to meet our goals. There are no quick fixes or easy solutions. Only by having a sound plan for economic growth and job creation will we be able to provide the services that Nova Scotians expect and deserve. Nova Scotians and this government must work together to ensure that the province continues to be competitive and to grow, but we're building on a solid foundation.

Nova Scotia has become stronger, prouder, better since 1999—one of the best places in Canada to live, work, and raise a family. This document explains our goals and how we will accomplish them in the next fiscal year.

John Hamm

Government

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Government
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Part One
The Government Business Plan

Introduction

The Government of Nova Scotia's social and fiscal policy objectives are focused on the health and well-being of Nova Scotians in 2003-2004.

Nova Scotia must work with parents now to encourage children to be physically active, so they grow into healthy and happy young adults.

We must act now to help people stop smoking, so many Nova Scotians won't suffer needlessly from tobacco-related illnesses in years to come.

And we must help Nova Scotia reduce the incidence of chronic diseases and disabilities, so our people will live long and productive lives.

Nova Scotians will be happier and more fulfilled if they are healthy and well, now and in future. That's why government's long-term goal is A Healthy, Prosperous, and Self-Sufficient Nova Scotia.

The Government Business Plan identifies how government will work with Nova Scotians, organizations, and communities in 2003–2004 to achieve this long-term goal. There is a wealth of information about government's priorities and plans at all levels, from making our education system more accountable to parents to reporting on our economic performance for the year.

Results of these plans will be reported in the Annual Accountability Report at the end of the fiscal year.

Nova Scotia's Planning Context—2003–2004

Demographic Context

Demographic changes under way in Nova Scotia, as in the rest of Canada, are having a profound effect on Government of Nova Scotia programs and priorities in 2003–2004.

The baby boom generation is coming to the end of their working years and moving into retirement, and there are fewer young people coming along to replace them. It is estimated that by 2007, Nova Scotia will have 7 per cent more elderly and 8 per cent fewer people under the age of 20. Young people between the ages of 18 and 29 are tending to leave Nova Scotia, and if they stay in the province, many are moving from rural areas into Halifax.

The Halifax Metro area population has grown by 10 per cent in the last decade, and 12 out of the 18 Nova Scotia counties have seen declining numbers. This means that rural areas have fewer taxpayers to cover the cost of the basic infrastructure that its citizens need.

The aging workforce, along with changes in the type of education and training required for many jobs, are starting to contribute to labour shortages in certain sectors of Nova Scotia's economy. Statistics Canada estimates that by 2008 Nova Scotia will have fewer people overall in the workforce.

The Government Business Plan outlines a number of strategic investments this year intended to offset the impact of these changes in future.

The Health Context

The effect of the changing population is felt acutely in the health sector. There are more people who want and need a greater array of health-related services. While provincial government funding for health care has been increasing significantly each year in Nova Scotia, it has not been keeping up with these demands.

Promoting healthy lifestyles is very important, particularly in Nova Scotia. Nova Scotians are a little less healthy overall than residents of other provinces. Many are sedentary, and an above-average number suffer from obesity and disabilities. Nova Scotia also has a higher incidence of chronic diseases such as cancer, respiratory problems, diabetes, high blood pressure, and mental illness.

Health problems are also cropping up in alarming new areas, particularly among young children. Young children, for example, are not getting enough physical activity. By grade 3, some 45 per cent of Nova Scotia girls and 37 per cent of boys are overweight or at risk of being overweight, which is a known cause of health problems such as diabetes.

The Romanow Commission's report on the Future of Health Care in Canada, released in November 2002, made recommendations for a new approach to health care in Canada. The Government of Nova Scotia shares Mr. Romanow's vision of making Canadians—and Nova Scotians—the healthiest people in the world.

All provinces and the federal government signed a five-year Health Accord in February 2003, which will fund new initiatives to support good health and health care. Although new federal funds are not sufficient to cover all of the Romanow recommendations, Nova Scotia has included additional federal funding for health in its 2003–2004 budget.

The Government of Nova Scotia outlined plans for its new approach to health care in a report, Your Health Matters, released on March 20, 2003. Chief among the strategies for 2003–2004 is a focus on promoting good health and preventing health problems.

Our Financial Context

Government is fully committed to annual balanced budgets and has been working hard to contain spending and improve accountability for taxpayers' funds. Nova Scotians should know how their money is spent, and government continues to improve management and reporting processes.

Government has used a balanced approach to financial planning, carefully controlling spending while delivering the services that Nova Scotians want and need and making investments to encourage job growth and stimulate the economy.

In 2003–2004, for the second year in a row, the province will bring in a balanced budget. In addition, the province is forecasting a budget surplus for 2002–2003, exceeding its initial target.

While Nova Scotia's per capita net direct debt is still among the highest in Canada, government is working to reduce the ratio of net direct debt to gross domestic product. This ratio is projected to decline to 43 per cent in 2002–2003 from 46.4 per cent in 1999–2000, and Nova Scotia's goal is to bring the ratio down further.

Giving Nova Scotia a competitive tax environment is considered key to the province's economic competitiveness and growth. Tax changes are planned in 2003–2004 to benefit both individuals and small businesses.

Our Economic Context

Nova Scotia's high standard of living and social well-being depend upon a dynamic, innovative economy.

Nova Scotia's economy has shown robust GDP and employment growth over the past five years, tracking closely to the performance of the Canadian economy at more than 3 per cent on average.

Offshore energy development helped the Nova Scotia economy weather the weakness of the Canadian and US economies in 2001. In 2002, the personal (household) sector and investment provided the main sources of GDP and employment growth. Retail sales increased 5.4 per cent and housing starts increased 21.5 per cent. The province realized, overall, a net gain of 5,100 jobs in 2002, compared to 2001.

Nova Scotia's economy is increasingly linked with that of the United States, with 82.6 per cent of exports going south of the border in 2002. While 2001 saw the first trade surplus in Nova Scotia in 40 years, Nova Scotia still trails other provinces in its exports as a percentage of GDP. Government is planning strategies in 2003–2004 to boost Nova Scotia's export potential.

Innovation is vital to the future success of Nova Scotia. Government will work with many public and private-sector partners in 2003–2004 to promote more innovation.

Tourism offers a major opportunity to promote growth and economic opportunity, particularly in the rural areas. Tourism receipts have increased to more than $1.2 billion last year, and some estimate significant growth in the next 10 years. A variety of tourism promotion strategies are planned for 2003–2004.

Education and Training

Changes in the workforce have indicated the need for flexible forms of education.

The energy sector, an aging workforce, advancing technology, and globalization have created a need to increase the number of skilled and qualified workers and, in many cases, to upgrade the skills and qualifications of workers today. Resource industries, for example, are requiring better trained and educated workers.

Nova Scotia has plans under way to develop a well-balanced, skilled, and knowledgeable labour force. The Skills Nova Scotia Framework and Action Plan will coordinate education and training opportunities for adult Nova Scotians through partnerships with business, labour, industry, communities, and education and training institutions.

Government is making improvements to the public school program in 2003–2004 to ensure that all Nova Scotia students have a strong educational foundation, and the Nova Scotia School for Adult learning will continue to meet the needs of adult learners.

Government will continue to use the income assistance system to help and support Nova Scotians in achieving independence and self-sufficiency. Employment Support Services, a program to help recipients move towards employability and self-sufficiency, served a total of 9,709 people last year at a total cost of $8.3 million.

Lifestyle and Environment

Nova Scotians value their safe communities and beautiful surroundings. Government works with communities and individuals to protect Nova Scotia's natural resources and contribute to international efforts to conserve energy and control climate change.

International developments have helped shape Nova Scotia's priorities in 2003–2004 in many of these areas.

Nova Scotia is participating in national discussions on the implementation of the Kyoto Accord to reduce energy emissions. As clean water is also a concern, the province adopted a Drinking Water Strategy in October 2002 to protect our water supply sources and make sure that water is safe to drink.

The threat of terrorism and war have increased the importance of security for Nova Scotians, and this year government's Emergency Measures Organization will be augmenting its readiness to respond to threats.

Nova Scotians value and celebrate our racial and cultural diversity. Government is planning in 2003–2004 to celebrate and promote cultural development and special services, particularly in our Acadian and Mi'kmaq communities.

Strategic Goals

The Government of Nova Scotia is focused in 2003–2004 on a long-term corporate goal:

Healthy, Prosperous, and Self-Sufficient Nova Scotia.

Government's 2003-2004 priorities are linked to this goal.

Core Business Areas

The Government Business Plan is grouped around six core business areas. These are the fundamental roles, functions, and services that Nova Scotians expect their government to provide. They support the core policy objectives of government.

The Government Business Plan articulates priorities in each of government's six core business areas:

1. Health and health care
2. Education and learning
3. The economy
4. Families and communities
5. The environment
6. Government services

1. Health and Health Care

In November 2002, the Romanow Commission on the Future of Health Care in Canada identified a number of priorities to protect the future of health care in Canada, including

- health human resource planning and incentives for professionals working in rural communities
- faster access to tests and treatment
- community- and team-based health services available for more hours of the day
- guaranteed funding to support stability and long-term planning
- clear standards and accountability for results

Nova Scotia, along with the Government of Canada and other provinces, signed the five-year Health Care Renewal Accord in February 2003, which will support increased investment in health care, in areas such as primary health care, home care, and pharmaceutical coverage. It also provides funds for more diagnostic and medical equipment, information technology to support health care, and electronic health records.

The Government of Nova Scotia has developed a plan to respond to these national trends and build an effective health-care system for Nova Scotia in 2003–2004 and beyond. Your Health Matters outlines strategies to make essential health-care services available when people need them, while promoting health and wellness for Nova Scotians of all ages to prevent illness and improve quality of life.

Government will collaborate with communities, health professionals, and health organizations on a number of related priorities in 2003–2004, investing money where and when it counts: helping people stay healthy; training and retaining more doctors, nurses, and other health professionals; shortening waiting lists for tests, treatment, and care; caring for our seniors; expanding access to health services close to home; and being accountable for results.

Nova Scotia will continue to increase its health budget this year to respond to fund these new priorities. In 2000, the budget was approximately $1.7 billion. In 2002–2003, it increased by $300 million to just under $2 billion. And this year the total health budget will be more than $2.1 billion.

Health and Health Care Priorities 2003–2004

Wellness and Health Promotion

The Government of Nova Scotia is making health promotion and wellness a top priority in 2003–2004. A new Office of Health Promotion has been created to work with health partners, communities, and Nova Scotians themselves on strategies to promote wellness and good health. A variety of initiatives will be under way to support these goals.

Priority: Office of Health Promotion

Created in December 2002, the Office of Health Promotion aims to achieve Nova Scotia's vision of well-being—individuals and communities working together to achieve a healthier population. Its mandate is to improve the ability of individuals, organizations, sectors, and government departments to communicate and work together to achieve a healthier population.

Areas of focus will include

- healthy babies, children, and families
- changes in behaviour and thinking, beginning with children
- illness and injury prevention
- support for community sport and recreation
- addiction prevention and treatment for people with addictions

The Deputy Minister of Health is the Chief Executive Officer of the Office of Health Promotion, which will have administrative support from a variety of departments, agencies, and organizations working on health promotion activities. (Office of Health Promotion)

Priority: Home Visiting Program

Healthy Beginnings is a home visiting program in which public health nurses contact the families of the 10,000 babies born in Nova Scotia annually. This year, public health nurses and trained community members will provide parenting and breastfeeding support, as well as links to community resources such as child care, family resource centres, and programs for children with special needs. (Health, Community Services)

Priority: Tobacco Strategy Implementation

Implementing Nova Scotia's comprehensive tobacco strategy will continue in 2003–2004 to encourage more Nova Scotians to quit smoking. The Smoke-free Places Act will be enforced, and new nicotine treatment staff and tobacco coordinators will be put in place. New approaches to smoking cessation are being piloted. There will be a focus this year on reducing smoking among youth. An ongoing public awareness campaign will include enhancements to the sickofsmoke.com Web site and a workplace tobacco awareness program. (Office of Health Promotion, Health, Finance, Education, Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations)

Priority: Encouraging Physical Activity

Following one of the world's most extensive studies into the activity levels of children, Nova Scotia's first physical activity strategy was launched in 2002. From 2002 to 2005, $2.4 million will be invested to increase the physical activity of youth through the Active Kids/Healthy Kids program. Strategies will engage communities in promoting physical activity (Active Communities) and developing pilot projects to bring schools and communities together to support physical activity (Active School Communities). A public school education component will focus this year on active and healthy lifestyles, and new health education programs will start in grades 4–7.

The new High Five and Sports Futures programs, as well as work with schools, communities and youth leadership groups, will help recreational leaders and coaches promote fair play and encourage children of all ages to participate in physical activity throughout their lives. (Office of Health Promotion, Education, Community Services, Aboriginal Affairs, Education)

Priority: Recreational Facility Access

The availability of school facilities for purposes other than education varies across the province. In 2003–2004, government will introduce a policy framework to equalize access, standardize rates charged, and ensure that facilities are available for community and youth use for as many hours as possible. Government will also continue to work with community organizations to improve quality and access to rinks, playing fields, and other recreational facilities. (Office of Health Promotion, Education)

Priority: Healthy Choices, Healthy Eating

Children and youth can make healthy food choices only if healthy food is available. A survey will be conducted in spring 2003 on food choices in school cafeterias, canteens, and vending machines. Working with schools, school boards, and provincial and community partners, government will use the survey results to develop guidelines for expanding healthy choices on menus and in hallways. Survey results will also be used to support school programs and parent information that promote healthy eating for young people. (Office of Health Promotion, Education)

Priority: Illness and Injury Prevention

Seventy-four per cent of all deaths in Nova Scotia are from heart and lung disease, cancer, and diabetes. Chronic diseases can be prevented or delayed by addressing a variety of common risk factors, including tobacco use, an unhealthy diet, and physical inactivity. Since fall 2001, Dalhousie University has been working with health partners on the research and development of a comprehensive chronic disease prevention strategy. Recommendations for action will be presented to government in fall 2003. (Health, Office of Health Promotion)

Priority: Employee Wellness

Government will develop an employee wellness strategy to promote a healthy government workplace. This project will include conducting a workplace environment survey to develop baseline data, promotion of healthy lifestyles, and development of a better approach to disability management. The Public Service Commission will develop programs for public servants, working closely with the Office of Health Promotion and employees within government. (Public Service Commission, Office of Health Promotion)

Health Care Services

In 2003–2004, Nova Scotia will continue to make improvements to the full range of health-care services that Nova Scotians rely on every day when they are sick or injured.

Priority: Multi-Year Funding for Front-Line Health Care

Beginning in 2003–2004, Nova Scotia will increase funding for hospitals and other services provided by the district health authorities by at least 7 per cent per year. This will support front-line health care, in addition to funding already provided for salaries and negotiated salary increases. The funding will enable the districts to plan more effectively to hire doctors, nurses, and health professionals for hospitals and clinics. In turn, patients will receive higher-quality health care and encounter shorter wait lists for tests and treatment. (Health)

Priority: Enhanced Cardiac Care

The Department of Health will provide up to $5 million in 2003–2004 to enhance cardiac care in Nova Scotia. The funding will support the Capital District Health Authority's plan to add equipment, staff, and other resources to give patients faster access to cardiac tests and surgeries. This investment will benefit patients in all parts of the province who use cardiac facilities in the Capital District. (Health)

Priority: Reducing Waiting Lists

Nova Scotians who urgently need a test or treatment get the care they need, but people awaiting less critical or elective tests and treatments often wait longer than they should. Government is working with health professionals to shorten these wait lists, keeping less critical health problems from becoming urgent. Government is aiming to reduce wait times for CT scans and MRIs, along with other tests and treatment, such as surgeries, orthopedics, radiation, specialist referrals, and time spent in emergency rooms.

A working group—involving doctors, radiologists, other health professionals and managers, and Department of Health staff—was formed in March 2003 to make recommendations to the Minister of Health on additional areas for monitoring and reporting wait lists. Better and coordinated wait-list information is needed in more health test and treatment areas. The working group will submit its first report in fall 2003 and a second report in spring 2004 with recommendations on how to use the information to shorten wait lists in priority areas, to increase patient choice, and to build accountability. (Health)

Priority: Improving Mental Health Services

In February 2003, government released its strategic direction for mental health, developed by more than 200 Nova Scotians, including mental health professionals, advocacy groups, people who use mental health services, and members of their families. Nova Scotia is the first province in Canada to have mental health standards to support this direction. Some $2 million will be invested in 2003–2004.

Community supports will be put in place for people of all ages with mental health disabilities. These include supportive work environments, training programs, and social and recreational programs. Services for seniors, including services for seniors in nursing homes, will also be available, and crisis services will be developed in all district health authorities. (Health)

Priority: Children's Mental Health

A top health priority is to meet the special mental health needs of children and youth in Nova Scotia. These services will be expanded in all districts.

Intensive community-based treatment teams will work with children and youth with severe mental health and behavioural disabilities. The goal is to provide the help they need where they live.

Building on the expertise and services provided in the 50 community mental health clinics across the province, mental health professionals will use a team approach in providing services across districts. These teams will also continue to have access to services from the IWK and specialty mental health services.

A new 12-bed residential rehabilitation treatment centre for youth will open in Halifax in summer 2003. It will provide professional care and security that previously could be provided only outside Nova Scotia for most children. This centre will be available to those who require medium- to longer-term care. (Health)

Priority: Recruiting and Keeping Health Workers

In 2003–2004, government will complete detailed research, along with an analysis of training and workplace issues, that will be used to build comprehensive health human resource strategies.

While recruiting has been successful to date, communities, particularly in rural areas, still need more doctors and nurses. Some specialists are in particularly short supply. Efforts are already under way to train, recruit, and retain more doctors, nurses, medical lab technologists, and advanced paramedics. Actions to build on this progress are planned for 2003 and beyond.

Programs are needed to support the changing roles of health professionals, including programs for professionals already working. They must consider innovative ways to train some professionals more quickly, through concentrated programs or recognition of prior learning. (Health)

Priority: Training More Nurses

Nova Scotia needs to augment recent efforts to increase the number of nurses graduating from university. Government will invest $7.1 million to train an additional 240 nurses over the next four years. (Health)

Priority: Training More Doctors

Dalhousie Medical School enrols 82 undergraduates—potential doctors—each year. Government will work with the medical school and other partners to explore strategies to train more doctors and encourage them to set up practice in Nova Scotia. Eight new first-year positions will be added to the Dalhousie Medical School in fall 2003. (Health)

Priority: Primary Health Care Renewal

Primary Health Care Renewal is about positively influencing the many factors that affect health. It includes a team approach to health and health-care delivery, all-day access to essential health services, care for people of all ages and cultures in their communities, and appropriate use of technology. Between 2003 and 2005, at least $17 million will be invested to support the development of Primary Health Care Renewal through the Primary Health Care Transition Fund. In 2003–2004, the Department of Health will involve primary health-care leaders and culturally diverse populations including African Canadians, First Nations, Acadians, Francophones, and immigrants. They will develop guidelines and policies that address diversity and social inclusion issues in primary health care as they relate to race, ethnicity, language, and culture. (Health)

Improved Services to Seniors

A range of options must be available to provide the various levels of support and care that seniors need. Options can include home care, assisted living, boarding homes, residential care facilities, and nursing homes.

Priority: Consultation on Seniors Services

Government will consult in 2003 on the options and services available to seniors, how they can most effectively be delivered, and what regulations are appropriate to protect seniors. This work will guide decisions on growth and delivery of services for seniors, as well as lead to changes in the Homes for Special Care Act. (Health)

Priority: Improving Access to Nursing Homes

In 2000, the province began coordinating the wait list for nursing home and residential care facility beds and now has reliable statistics on the need and associated wait times for nursing home beds. This information will be considered as part of the review of services for seniors, to determine the need for more nursing home beds in the province. (Health)

Priority: Providing Better Care for Seniors

Nursing home residents with challenging behaviours can hurt themselves, or may hurt people around them. In 2003–2004, $400,000 will be invested to begin an education and advisory work that will lead to improved care for seniors with aggressive or other challenging behaviours. (Health)

Priority: Reducing Nursing Home Costs for Seniors

Government will continue its plan to reduce costs for seniors. In November 2002, government announced $4 million for the first phase of a four-year plan to ease seniors' financial burden and worry. The plan protects more assets from the financial-assessment process that determines what seniors should contribute toward their care. In 2003–2004 government will take the next steps in a multi-year plan to reduce the daily rate that some seniors now pay in nursing homes. (Health)

Priority: Stabilizing Home Care

In 2003–2004, government will continue to invest more in home care, to protect the current level of services. An additional allocation of $1.1 million will help to address the existing waiting list for services, and the review discussed above will guide future expansion of home care. (Health)

Priority: Affordable Drugs

Government is working to keep drugs affordable for the 95,000 seniors insured though the provincial Pharmacare program. Seniors pay 33 per cent of the cost of each individual prescription, until they reach a maximum annual co-pay of $350. Some 55,000 low-income seniors are not required to pay the annual $336 premium or pay a reduced amount. In 2003, government is investing about $10 million to freeze the premium and co-pay at current levels. Also, seniors will no longer pay more than $30 toward the cost of an individual prescription. (Health)

Health System Management

Priority: Accountability for Results

In 2003–2004, government will strengthen accountability and reporting on results of the health-care system.

- Government will continue to report to the federal government on how the provincial health-care system meets the requirements of the Canada Health Act.
- Government will report annually to the public on how and where health funding is being invested. An annual report on Your Health Matters will account for how the year's activities matched plans and will report specifically on issues like quality, access and efficiency, and progress in primary or community-based health care, home care, and drug coverage.
- In fall 2003, the Minister of Health will issue an annual Report to Patients. The report will include information on wait lists, ambulance response times, and other measures of effectiveness.
- Nova Scotia will also report on how information technology is being used to improve the quality of and access to health care for Nova Scotians, particularly in rural communities.
- Future reports will include wait lists in more test and treatment areas, as well as standards that define how long a person can wait for certain procedures before it has an impact on health.
- An annual report will highlight progress on the Tobacco Strategy.

Priority: Health Equipment Investments

Government has significantly invested in equipment, and the trained professionals who use it, to shorten wait lists. New surgical, x-ray, and cardiac equipment has been purchased for hospitals across the province.

- Access to MRIs has tripled with the purchase of two machines—one for Cape Breton and one at the IWK in Halifax.
- Bone densitometers have been purchased for Truro, Yarmouth, and Cape Breton.
- Dialysis machines have been provided in Cape Breton and Dartmouth.
- Digital x-ray machines, which allow x-rays to be transferred and read by specialists at other hospitals, were purchased for all regional hospitals.

Between 2003 and 2006, another $45 million will be invested in diagnostic equipment. Priorities will be developed in consultation with the district health authorities. (Health)

Priority: Renovated Hospitals

Some of the recent projects include a new hospital in Amherst, major renovations to Yarmouth Regional Hospital, an expansion of the Dartmouth emergency room, and renovations to the Middleton Hospital. In 2003–2004, the province will continue to invest in hospitals, with dedicated funding in the spring 2003 budget. The Department of Health is working with the district health authorities on this year's priority list for new and renovated hospital projects. Projects will be announced in spring 2003. (Health)

Priority: Hospital Information Systems

A new hospital information system will enable the health records of Nova Scotians to travel with them wherever they access care in the province. A shared electronic record will allow health-care providers to access a patient's record and enter health history, medications, test results, and other relevant health information. The hospital information system, which supports the electronic patient records, is currently being put in place in the Guysborough Antigonish Strait Health Authority. It is expected to be available province-wide by the end of 2005. (Health)

Health— Measuring Our Performance

Measure: **Health Human Resource Positions Filled**
Outcome: Access to quality health care

This is a measure of the supply and distribution of primary health-care personnel in under-served areas.

Performance Highlights and Targets

During 2002, of the 34 family physicians required in under-served areas, all but five (85 per cent) of the positions were filled. Nova Scotia's target is to achieve 80 per cent or more through ongoing recruitment efforts that include engaging advanced-practice nurses and non-physician providers to work along with physicians throughout the health-care system. (Health)

Measure: **Ambulance Response Times**
Outcome: Access to quality health care

The industry standard for response time is based on chances of survival after a cardiac arrest. Chances of survival improve if an ambulance arrives at an emergency scene in nine minutes or less.

Performance Highlights and Targets

In 2001–2002, response times were nine minutes or less 67 per cent of the time. Our target is to achieve this response time 68 per cent of the time by 2004–2005. (Health)

Measure: **Youth Smoking (ages 12–19)**
Outcome: Healthier lifestyles

Smoking is the number one cause of preventable death and disability. High rates of smoking translate into high rates of chronic diseases—like lung cancer and heart/respiratory disease—later in life.

Performance Highlights and Targets

In 2001, 18.9 per cent of Nova Scotia's youth smoked. The Nova Scotia Student Drug Use Survey released in 2002 indicates a significant reduction in student tobacco use. This is a positive change from previously reported trends. We will work to reduce the percentage of youth who smoke in Nova Scotia. (Office of Health Promotion, Health)

Measure: Physical Activity/Inactivity

Outcome: Healthier lifestyles

Regular physical activity provides important health benefits, while inactivity is a major risk factor for heart disease and depression. Physical inactivity is measured by calculating the proportion of the population, 12 years and older, who report being physically active less than once per week or never.

Performance Highlights and Targets

In 2000–2001, 52.6 per cent of Nova Scotians reported being inactive. Our goal is to increase physical activity. A target is to be established in 2003–04 that will be consistent with the new national target for 2010. (Office of Health Promotion, Health)

Measure: Body Mass Index (BMI)

Outcome: Healthier lifestyles

BMI is a valid measurement of weight in relation to height for healthy adults aged 20-65. A healthy body weight (for height) is associated with a reduced risk of health problems. A BMI between 20 and 25 is considered the healthy range.

Performance Highlights and Targets:

In 2000-2001, 55.2 per cent of Nova Scotians reported a BMI in excess of the healthy range; our target is to decrease this percentage over time.

Measure: Vaccination Coverage (Flu Shot)

Outcome: Healthier lifestyles

Vaccination coverage is measured by calculating the percentage of people (65 years and older) who had a flu shot in the past year. By increasing the number of people who receive flu shots, we can decrease the burden of illness on vulnerable populations, and reduce the strain on the health system at the same time.

Performance Highlights and Targets:

In 2000-2001, 66 per cent of Nova Scotians (65 and older) reported receiving a flu shot. Immunization against the flu is an important public health intervention. By 2004-2005, we aim to increase the percentage to 80 per cent.

2. Education

The Government of Nova Scotia will implement strategies to enhance education and learning opportunities for Nova Scotians of all ages in 2003–2004. Government's budget for education and universities will increase by a total of $55.6 million, to address key priorities in public school education, skill development, and higher education and adult learning.

Learning for Life: Planning for Student Success, announced in fall 2002, will guide efforts to improve education for Nova Scotians from birth to adulthood. Components give students a solid educational foundation in the public system, including

- more support in the early years
- more support in basic educational needs such as reading, writing, and mathematics
- promotion of good-quality teaching
- support to parents in encouraging student achievement
- keeping safe school environments for students

Government will move forward with a comprehensive approach to programs and services for adult education and labour market training of Nova Scotians. The Skills Nova Scotia Framework and Action Plan will coordinate education and training opportunities for adult Nova Scotians through a partnership with business, labour, industry, communities, and education and training institutions.

Government will also be making some strategic investments in higher education. A plan to expand the Nova Scotia Community College's facilities and enrolment will start to unfold in 2003–2004. Post-secondary students will have access to a new student debt-relief program, and additional funding will be provided to Nova Scotia universities to offset rising operating costs and limit tuition increases.

Education—Priorities 2003–2004

Learning for Life: Planning for Student Success

Learning for Life sets out a plan to address the fundamental needs of Nova Scotia's public education system. Government is aiming for smaller class sizes in the early years, more support for students with special needs, good-quality teaching, and clearer testing to measure the progress of our students. The increase in public school funding will support special education; African Canadian students; assessment, evaluation, and reporting; math; literacy; and the new Code of Conduct.

Priority: Support for Students with Special Needs

Almost 20 per cent of students require some level of special programming or services during their school years. The range of special education programs and services has increased in recent years, but government recognizes that more is needed. Funding will be targeted in 2003–2004 for resources to meet diverse student needs. Government will increase the number of core professionals to support special needs, including special education and reading recovery teachers. Funding will also be provided to research system technology to support special needs. (Education)

Priority: Reducing Class Sizes

Almost 27 per cent of grades primary–2 classes in Nova Scotia had more than 25 students in 2001–2002. This reduces the level of individual attention and support a teacher can provide to the youngest students. In 2003–2004, government will start the first phase of a plan to reduce class sizes in grades primary–2 to no more than 25 students by September 2005. This year, approximately 75 teachers will be added to the system to ensure that there are no more than 25 students per grade primary class. (Education)

Priority: Increasing Learning Success in High Schools

Government will launch four pilots to explore the diverse needs of learners in high schools, as part of the Increasing Learning Success strategy. Increasing Learning Success is a comprehensive guide to help high schools address the diverse learning needs of their students. It includes such areas as time tabling, resources, and teaching strategies. (Education)

Priority: Mathematics Strategy

Improving mathematics education will be a priority in 2003–2004, following test results that show performance is below acceptable standards. Mathematics Strategy initiatives will include

- professional development for school-based math leaders in grades primary–9
- workshops for principals on mathematics program implementation
- training and resources for math teachers
- parent information to support math learning, particularly in grades primary–3
- new high school math courses
- Nova Scotia examinations in mathematics for Anglophone, Francophone, and French immersion students

- publication of a comprehensive report on the mathematics program assessments (Education)

Priority: New Report Cards for Public Schools

Government is committed to providing parents with regular, clear information on their children's progress. Government will explore the use of a standard student report card in 2003–2004 for elementary, junior high, and high school students to clearly show parents how their children are progressing.

- The Department of Education will conduct a consultation in April 2003 with pilot schools, parents, and other partners to evaluate new report card options. The department will work with boards on the use of technology in producing report cards.
- The third annual Minister's Report to Parents will be produced in 2003–2004. It will include results from provincial, national, and international tests, as well as actions to improve achievement.
- The new provincial report cards will have a section for reporting outcomes of individual program plans (IPPs). Government will work with school boards to identify the best way to review IPPs used to guide students with special needs. (Education)

Priority: Teacher Training and Development

The Learning for Life plan identifies the need for professional development for teachers to support curriculum priorities. Areas of focus in 2003–2004 will be mathematics, science, and literacy. Professional development will also be provided in new curriculum areas such as African Heritage Literature 12. Teacher training and development will be offered for new school administrators, to support the Code of Conduct, to support teaching and learning through technology, and to promote school-wide enrichment activities. (Education)

Priority: Helping Parents Promote Learning

Government will develop resources for parents to support their essential role in their children's education.

- A new Web site for parents will include plain-language information on what students are learning and how students are doing in our schools.
- "Let's Talk about..." pamphlets will inform parents about the instructional program and ways in which they can support students' literacy development.
- Positive Parenting Workshops will be held for parents of African Canadian students to increase their knowledge of the school system and help them support their children in achieving school success. (Education)

Priority: Comprehensive Assessment Program

Government's Program of Learning Assessment for Nova Scotia (PLANS) will continue to provide reliable information on student achievement in specific curriculum areas. The following assessments are scheduled for 2003–2004:

- the Programme of International Student Assessment (PISA)(15-year-old students)
- Elementary Mathematics Program Assessment (grade 6 students in English and French immersion programs)
- Elementary Literacy Assessment (grade 5 students)
- Nova Scotia Examinations in English 12, English/Communications 12, Mathematics 12/Mathématiques 12, Advanced Mathematics 12/Mathématiques avancée 12, Calcul différential et intégral 12, Chemistry 12 (English and French immersion), and Physics 12.
- The School Achievement Indicators Program (SAIP) in Science (13- and 16-year-old students) and a Junior High Mathematics Program Assessment (grade 8) (Education)

Priority: Time to Learn Strategy

To ensure that students have adequate instructional time to meet expectations for achievement in literacy and mathematics, new guidelines for instructional time in grades 7–9 will be introduced in the fall of 2003 and implemented in September 2004. This will include minimum time requirements for mathematics, core French, and language arts. Pilot projects will explore new models for the delivery of core French in the elementary and junior high program, including innovative ways to use instructional time. (Education)

Priority: Literacy Programs

Active Young Readers/Jeunes lecteurs actifs will continue with curriculum development, professional development, and resources to assist classroom teachers in assessing students' reading development, strengths, and learning needs

- Writers in Action, introduced in grade 4 in 2002–2003, will be expanded to grade 5 with appropriate resources and professional development. Spelling will be a particular focus in 2003–2004.
- Funding will be targeted for the enhancement of resource teachers, student services professionals, and Reading Recovery™ ratios with school boards, to move toward the longer-term goal of having the program available to all grade 1 students who require it. (Education)

Priority: Racial Equity Policy Implementation

The Racial Equity Policy will be implemented in 2003–2004. The policy outlines the government's commitment to promoting equity in our public school system and supports school board racial equity policies. (Education)

Priority: Code of Conduct Implementation

Guidelines on the provincial Code of Conduct will be in place in September 2003. Resources will be developed for use by schools in addressing behavioural concerns, classroom management, and school-wide positive interventions. Research on the effectiveness of these approaches is under way in partnership with Dalhousie University and school boards. (Education)

Priority: School Construction

To ensure a healthy and safe environment in which our children can learn, government will continue with improvements to school infrastructure in school boards across the province.

Five new school construction projects are now in progress with an additional four to start in fiscal year 2003–2004.

- Windsor Regional High School
- South Colchester High School
- East Pictou High School
- West Pictou High School
- Truro Junior High

The school capital construction committee will continue its annual study of facilities and make recommendations on priorities. New school construction and addition/alteration projects for 2003–2004 will be announced early in the fiscal year.

Priority: School Additions, Alterations, and Repairs

Eight schools are now being added to and altered under a phased multi-year program to address building condition, environmental, and program issues at these schools. This will enhance and/or replace major school building components on a priority basis and identify and resolve environmental problems. Work is currently under way on four of the eight schools and will begin on an additional four in fiscal year 2003–2004.

In addition, $3 million in operating funding will be available for school repairs and non-capital renovations in 2003–2004.

Priority: Technology Improvements

The Information Economy Initiative (IEI) supports teaching and learning through the use of technology, with the current focus on grades 4–6. It includes the provision of computers, software, professional development, and technical support. It is expected that more than 900 computers and software will be added to grades 4–6 in 2003–2004 through IEI.

Skills Nova Scotia Framework and Action Plan

Skills Nova Scotia will ensure that Nova Scotians have access to learning opportunities throughout their lives. The Skills Nova Scotia Framework, prepared in consultation with business, labour, and other interested individuals and organizations, coordinates skill development activities that help Nova Scotians prepare for, find, and keep employment. This creates a labour force ready to respond to the demands of today's changing economy.

The goals of Skills Nova Scotia are

- to meet the skill needs of Nova Scotia's labour market
- to provide better labour market access and supports to Nova Scotians
- to strengthen Nova Scotia's system of lifelong learning opportunities

Priority: Release a Skills Nova Scotia Action Plan

A 2003–2004 Skills Nova Scotia Action Plan will be released in 2003, in conjunction with a Skills Nova Scotia report. These will evaluate annual progress and identify new opportunities and actions to achieve goals and objectives. (Education)

Priority: Promote Adult Learning

Under the Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning, the department will continue to administer and coordinate a system of programs for adults seeking to improve their literacy and essential skills and/or obtain the Nova Scotia High School Graduation Diploma for Adults. In 2003–2004

- a student information system will be piloted
- guidelines and procedures will be implemented for the Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) component of the diploma
- pilot projects will be supported under the Older Workers Pilot Project Initiative, and a tool kit and professional development will be provided to practitioners to help workers 55 and older improve their skills and find employment

Priority: Increase Apprenticeship

In response to business and labour needs, the department will promote careers in skilled trades and significantly enhance provision of apprenticeship training and client service over the next five years. Recent improvements include a state-of-the-art apprenticeship information management system and Internet delivery of apprenticeship training through the virtual campus. Remote delivery provides greater flexibility in training by allowing apprentices to access technical training at home or at work and continue to work for wages.

- Training will be provided for 45 per cent of active apprentices in 2003–2004, and a strategy will be developed to achieve a ratio of 250 apprentices for each Industrial Training and Certification Officer.
- A youth apprenticeship program will be established by the end of 2003–2004.
- Work will proceed on potential revisions to the Apprenticeship and Trades Qualifications Act.

Priority: Renegotiate the Labour Market Development Agreement

The Governments of Nova Scotia and Canada will work together to ensure that the Labour Market Development Agreement will advance federal and provincial skill priorities. Current skill priorities include: apprenticeship, learning and earning, employability, immigration, and labour market information. (Education)

Priority: Labour Market Leadership

The Department of Education will take on the responsibilities of the Forum of Labour Market Ministers Secretariat for a period of two years beginning in April 2003. The secretariat facilitates inter-jurisdictional discussion and co-operation between the federal and provincial/territorial governments on labour market issues. (Education)

Priority: Energy Sector Employment

The Department of Energy will promote employment and training in the energy sector, including making information available on employment trends and promoting co-op or summer work terms for post-secondary students. A private-public sector energy skills forum will be held in 2003–2004 to identify solutions to major labour issues projected for the sector in the next 5 to 10 years. (Energy)

Higher Education

Priority: Student Debt Reduction

Government will introduce a student debt-reduction program in 2003–2004 for students participating in the Nova Scotia Student Loan program. Qualifying students will get an annual credit of a percentage of their Nova Scotia Student Loan. There will also be extra credits for graduates who repay their loans and for graduates who continue to work in Nova Scotia. (Education)

Priority: Nova Scotia Community College Growth Plan

Government will make a major investment in the Nova Scotia Community College, providing capital funding to renovate or expand Nova Scotia Community College sites and increase enrolments. A substantial investment will be made in regional campuses and in the metro Halifax location. Changes will enable the Nova Scotia Community College to educate and train more students to respond to the Nova Scotia Skills Agenda and to oncoming shortages in a number of trades and professions. (Education)

Priority: University Funding

Government has provided additional funding assistance to universities in 2002–2003 to cover operating pressures in the current year. This is expected to mitigate tuition increases for 2003–2004. Government will create memorandums of understanding with each university to define our expectations and provide stable and more long-term funding for universities. (Education)

Priority: Help for Post-secondary Students with Disabilities

The Nova Scotia Community College and the Collège de l'Acadie will develop a special needs policy to help students with disabilities participate in post-secondary training and ensure that each college and university campus provides assistive technology workstations for students with disabilities.

- Government will track eligible students with disabilities, including their retention and graduation rates from the NSCC and universities and their success rates in making the transition to employment.
- NSCC will increase the number of individual program plan students and enhance enrolments in trades and technology and other important areas.
- The Employability Assistance for People with Disabilities program will expand its Transition to Employment program in summer 2003 for graduating students with disabilities.

Priority: Enhance French/Acadian Higher Education

Government will complete arrangements to merge Université Sainte-Anne and Collège de l'Acadie. Their five-year business plan will form the basis of high-quality, accessible post secondary education in French. Université Sainte-Anne will be able to take advantage of the Collège de l'Acadie's infrastructure to deliver more of its academic programs throughout the province.

Education—Measuring Our Performance

Measure: **School Achievement Indicators Program (SAIP) Results**

Outcome: Better educated Nova Scotians

Nova Scotia's SAIP assesses 16-year-old students in reading, writing, mathematics, and science. There are five levels of performance and the national standard for performance is set at level 3.

Performance Highlights and Targets

Reading: In 1998, Nova Scotia's results were below the national average.

Writing: In 1998, English students scored above the national average, while French students scored below the national average.

Math: In 2001, English students scored below the national average, while French students scored above the national average.

Science: In 1999, Nova Scotia's results were similar to the national average.

Our target is to work to improve SAIP results for all subjects, using the national average as our benchmark for future performance. (Education)

Measure: **High School Graduation Rate**

Outcome: Better educated Nova Scotians

This is a measure of the percentage of students receiving a high school diploma compared with the number of students who were in grade 9 three years earlier.

Performance Highlights and Targets

In June 2002, the graduation rate was 80 per cent, up from 79.0 per cent in 2001 and 74.9 per cent in 1996. Our target is to increase the graduation rate. (Education)

Measure: Participation in the Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning

Outcome: Better educated Nova Scotians

Nova Scotians need opportunities to continue to learn throughout their lives. This program supports the delivery of adult education programs that enable Nova Scotians to improve literacy levels and earn credits toward a high school diploma.

Performance Highlights and Targets

The first year of operation for the Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning was 2001–2002. About 3,700 Nova Scotians participated in programs that year. The participation rate is expected to increase in future years. (Education)

Measure: Nova Scotians with Post-Secondary Education

Outcome: Better educated Nova Scotians

Performance Highlights and Targets

In 2001, 59.9 per cent of Nova Scotians, aged 25–54, had a post-secondary certificate, diploma, or degree—outperforming all other provinces. We aim to have this percentage continue to increase. (Education)

Measure: P–12 Computer Ratio

Outcome: A technology-enhanced learning environment

Computers support student learning and achievement and help prepare them for the labour market. Two ratios are provided: total students to total computers and total students to current computers. "Current" is defined as a computer having sufficient capacity to run modern applications.

Performance Highlights and Targets

As of March 31, 2002, there were 6.2 students for every computer and 9.3 students for every current computer. Our target for 2005–2006 is a ratio of 5 to 1 in terms of total students to total computers. (Education)

3. The Economy

The Government of Nova Scotia will continue with programs and initiatives in 2003–2004 to promote prosperity and self-sufficiency for Nova Scotians. Economic growth is expected to produce more revenues that will pay for investments in health care, education, roads, and other areas.

Nova Scotia's economic performance has been improving, with robust GDP and employment growth over the past five years. The economy has tracked fairly closely to Canada's as a whole and is expected to continue to do so in 2003–2004.

Government will bring in a balanced operating budget for the second year in 2003–2004. The net direct debt to GDP ratio has decreased from 46.4 per cent three years ago to a projected 43 per cent in 2002-2003. Government's plan for lower taxes in 2003–2004 will help fuel consumer spending in the second half of this year and keep economic growth strong.

Nova Scotia's economic growth strategy, Opportunities for Prosperity, continues to set the policy framework for economic development to help business and industry take best advantage of available opportunities. Government has focused on five Strategic Growth Sectors: energy, information technology, life sciences, advanced manufacturing, and learning industries.

Opportunities for Prosperity is complemented by Seizing the Opportunity, Nova Scotia's comprehensive energy strategy, released in December 2001, and the Skills Nova Scotia Framework, released in fall 2002, designed to ensure that Nova Scotians have the education and training to meet our economic needs—today and tomorrow.

Specific initiatives in 2003–2004 are designed to support the foundations for economic growth, ensure the participation of Nova Scotians, and deepen confidence in the province's ability to compete.

The Economy—Priorities 2003–2004

Priority: Competitive Taxation

Lowering taxes and increasing competitiveness is a key component of government's plan to encourage new economic growth. This year's budget continues the process of increasing our competitiveness by lowering personal income taxes and introducing measures to improve our business climate. Government will introduce legislation that reduces personal income tax rates on all three income brackets, effective January 1, 2004. To ensure that tax dollars are returned to taxpayers as soon as possible, we will also make a one-time tax payment directly to the taxpayers of Nova Scotia in 2003.

In addition to personal income tax reductions, government is also introducing a number of measures to improve the competitiveness of small- and medium-sized businesses in Nova Scotia. We will increase the threshold on which the small business tax rate applies to match the recent federal increase. Recognizing the importance of venture capital to new and growing business, we have also extended the life of the Equity Tax Credit and have increased the investment limit available. These two measures combine to improve competitiveness and make it easier for small- and medium-sized businesses to raise capital during their formative early years.

Priority: Balanced Budget

For the second year in a row, the province will bring in a balanced budget in 2003–2004 and continue efforts to control spending and improve accountability for taxpayers' funds. Such efforts have resulted in the province forecasting a budget surplus for the past year 2002–2003 well exceeding its initial target. (Finance, Treasury and Policy Board.)

Priority: Brand Nova Scotia Initiative

In 2003–2004 the Brand Nova Scotia Initiative will be implemented through the Office of Economic Development in conjunction with an interdepartmental team of marketing experts. Brand Nova Scotia represents a cluster of communication, marketing, and business development functions that share the common goal of growing Nova Scotia's economy by promoting the best qualities of the place, the products, and the people.

This will involve helping Nova Scotia companies take better advantage of procurement opportunities; the development of partnerships around the creation and implementation of a distinctive made-in–Nova-Scotia wordmark to promote exports and local purchasing; pride of people, place, and products promotion at home and abroad; coordination of new and existing government marketing efforts; and an outreach to expatriates and friends of Nova Scotia around the world to support business, community, and economic development. (Economic Development)

Priority: Develop a Natural Gas Distribution System

Government will be working in 2003–2004 to ensure the early development of a natural gas distribution system that meets the goals of the Energy Strategy. Nova Scotians in some communities may have access to natural gas for individual and business use within the next year. The Government of Nova Scotia has approved the Nova Scotia Utility Board's decision to award a gas distribution franchise to Heritage Gas and a conditional franchise to Strait Area Gas. Government will coordinate administration of gas franchisees and direct liaison with gas distributors. (Energy)

Priority: Electricity Market Governance Committee

The Electricity Market Governance Committee, a component of government's Energy Strategy, is responsible for recommending the terms under which the electricity market in Nova Scotia is restructured. Specific areas of concentration include opening up of the electricity transmission system, electricity sales to the wholesale market, rules governing the construction of new generation facilities, and generation from renewable energy sources. The committee's final report will be delivered to government in 2003–2004. (Energy)

Priority: Promoting International Linkages

Intergovernmental Affairs will be working in 2003–2004 to expand Nova Scotia's international linkages to support and promote Nova Scotia's interests abroad. Specific efforts will ensure that Nova Scotia's interests are fairly considered in the development of solutions to trans-border irritants, security, and other issues and will support Nova Scotia's trade and investment strategies by keeping Nova Scotia departments and agencies abreast of international ideas, trends, and multilateral obligations. (Intergovernmental Affairs)

Priority: Business Expansion and Growth

Nova Scotia Business Inc. is the primary contact for businesses within Nova Scotia that are looking to expand their operations or businesses from outside the province looking to establish operations here. In 2003–2004, NSBI will provide new and innovative services for Nova Scotia companies to support growth within and outside provincial borders.

Export Development Services

- Export mapping: Identify and assess businesses' export capabilities and opportunities and work with trade partners to provide appropriate service.
- Export prospector: Help companies expand export markets and increase sales in the markets that offer the greatest opportunity for their products or services.
- Provincial trade coordination: Coordinate trade events and activities province-wide, as well as specific Team Canada/Team Canada Atlantic missions and the Nova Scotia Export Achievement Awards.

Financial Services

- Introduce a new lending program for small businesses to provide loans in amounts between $100,000 and $250,000.

Business Attraction

- Introduce an aggressive business development initiative to target specific industries and operations in advanced manufacturing and knowledge-based industries that fit with regional business strengths and capacities. (Nova Scotia Business Inc.)

Priority: Innovative Nova Scotia Policy

The Government of Nova Scotia will launch Innovative Nova Scotia as a means of growing and expanding the use of knowledge-based innovation in Nova Scotia. Innovation systems will bind Nova Scotian innovators with public, private, and academic innovation assets. The Office of Economic Development will coordinate direction for innovation policy and activity. Innovative Nova Scotia will be part of a regional effort under the Council of Atlantic Premiers' Atlantic Action Plan. (Office of Economic Development)

Priority: Building Regional Capacity

The Government of Nova Scotia will work with federal and municipal governments and community-based agencies to expand the capacity of communities to identify and meet development challenges. In 2003–2004 government will

- finalize and implement the Community Development Policy begun in 2002–2003
- work with partners to create and implement regional development strategies, particularly for communities in transition
- ensure that C@P sites continue to evolve to meet the needs of their communities as integrated functions of community and rural development infrastructures. (Office of Economic Development)

Priority: Implement the 2003 Tourism Plan

The 2003 Tourism Plan was developed by the industry/government Nova Scotia Tourism Partnership Council and serves as a guide for all marketing, product development, research, operations, and partnerships under the Nova Scotia Tourism Strategy. The council has 11 recommendations to capitalize on significant economic growth opportunities for Nova Scotia. Government will work with the council to implement the vision of 100 per cent revenue growth over the next decade. (Tourism and Culture)

Priority: Promote Cultural Industries

Cultural industries are important to Nova Scotia's economy. Cultural products have significant potential for growth that will translate into opportunities for individuals, businesses and communities throughout this province. Priorities in 2003–2004 include

- working with Nova Scotia's music industry on a comprehensive Music Sector Strategy, including marketing initiatives and support for businesses
- launching a new industry growth program for Nova Scotia book publishers, emphasizing out-of-province sales and recognition for Nova Scotia stories and authors
- market development for the craft sector, including a trade mission to Boston for 20 craft-based businesses
- cultural trade missions focused on music and publishing (Tourism and Culture)

Priority: Preparing for Acadian Celebrations

Nova Scotia will have a series of activities and events related to tourism, culture, and heritage of Acadians, to coincide with the 2003–2005 anniversaries of French exploration, colonization, and settlement, including the 3rd Congrès mondial acadien in 2004. In 2003–2004, the Department of Tourism and Culture will

- launch a new marketing campaign promoting the Acadian Celebrations in key tourism markets
- work with Le Village historique acadien de la Nouvelle-Écosse in West Pubnico to adapt the site into the Nova Scotia Museum system
- launch, in co-operation with the Council of Nova Scotia Archives, "The Acadian Experience in Nova Scotia," an on-line thematic resource guide and virtual exhibit, fully searchable and province-wide in scope and participation, to complement Acadie 2003–2005 and provide a significant Acadian/Cajun genealogical resource (Tourism and Culture)

Priority: Agricultural Risk Management

Government will strengthen the capacity of the agricultural industry to reduce and manage risks related to the market, environment, and finances. In 2003–2004, government will work to implement the five strategic pillars of the Agriculture Policy Framework (APF) Agreement—Environment, Business Risk Management, Food Safety and Food Quality, Renewal, and Science and Innovation. (Agriculture and Fisheries)

Priority: Air Infrastructure

The federal and Nova Scotia governments have announced funding of $1.4 million to support the expansion of commercial opportunities at the Halifax International Airport. The investment will allow the Halifax International Airport Authority to develop an additional 14 commercial lots, to attract new tenants and employment at the airport. (Transportation and Public Works)

Priority: Support Cape Breton Railway Infrastructure

The Government of Nova Scotia has helped develop a solution that will allow for continued rail service in Cape Breton. Some 4,000 additional rail car loads will move from the port of Sydney to Nova Scotia Power's generating station in Trenton in 2004, allowing the Cape Breton & Central Nova Scotia Railway to meet its required break-even threshold. In addition to having facilitated contributions of cargo or revenue from the key stakeholders (including Nova Scotia Power and CN), the province, together with the federal government, will contribute approximately $1 million between April 2003 and December 31, 2004, earmarked primarily for infrastructure/capital maintenance. Government will continue to work with the railroad and other stakeholders to build traffic for the line to see that it is sustainable over time. (Economic Development, Transportation and Public Works)

Priority: Promote Immigration

A new framework agreement is being negotiated with Citizenship and Immigration Canada to define roles and responsibilities between the federal and provincial governments, promote immigration policies appropriate to the province's needs, and ensure immigrant settlement needs in Nova Scotia. The Provincial Nominee Program will continue. (Education, Economic Development)

Economy—Measuring Our Performance

Measure: Balanced/Surplus Budget

Outcome: Improved Economic Climate

This measure reflects government's achievement of fiscal targets.

Performance Highlights and Targets

Government's fiscal plan for 2002–2003 to 2005–2006 reflected a surplus for 2002–2003 and balanced budgets for the remaining years. The latest fiscal updates continue to forecast a surplus for 2002–2003. Government is budgeting a balanced budget or surplus for the 2003–2004 year. (Finance)

Measure: Provincial Net Direct Debt (NDD) as a Percentage of GDP

Outcome: Improved Economic Climate

This is a measure of government's fiscal health. The higher the ratio, the greater the proportion of government debt to the total provincial economic activity.

Performance Highlights and Targets

In 2001–2002, the province's NDD to GDP declined to 44.1 per cent (using an estimate of GDP), from 45.1 per cent in 2000–2001 and 46.4 per cent in 1999–2000. Our target is to reduce the ratio.

Measure: Corporate Income and Capital Tax Burden

Outcome: Improved economic/business climate

Corporate income and capital tax rates measure the overall business tax rate applied to Nova Scotia business. It tells us about the general tax rates applied to business income and to business capital—the two major elements of business investment.

Performance Highlights and Targets

In 2002, Nova Scotia's corporate and capital tax rates were generally competitive with other Atlantic provinces, and this will continue to be the goal in future years.

Measure: **Marginal Effective Personal Tax Rates**
Outcome: Improved economic climate

This measure indicates how much tax an individual can expect to pay on the next dollar of taxable income earned. The income brackets are distinguished by the terms low (up to $30,000), middle (up to $60,000), high (over $60,000), and high plus (the start of a high-income surtax based on the amount of basic tax payable or another income bracket—$100,000).

Performance Highlights and Targets

In 2002, Nova Scotia's personal income tax rates were generally competitive with Atlantic Canada. We are committed to remaining competitive with other provinces, particularly the Atlantic provinces.

Measure: **Credit Rating by Major Rating Agencies**
Outcome: Improved economic climate

A credit rating is an evaluation of a borrower's ability and willingness to pay interest and to repay principal. Rating firms provide investors with measures of credit quality of bonds or other financial instruments. A credit rating affects the borrower's debt-servicing costs and the investor's rate of return, since an investor will demand a higher interest rate on a more risky, lower-rated security.

Performance Highlights and Targets

In 2001–2002, the province received a BBB (high) rating from the Dominion Bond Rating Service (DBRS). Our target is to improve the credit rating by 2004–2005.

Measure: Business Climate Index

Outcome: Competitive business climate

The Nova Scotia Business Climate Index applies a number of business climate indicators to monitor and compare Nova Scotia's business climate nationally and in Atlantic Canada. The indicators are grouped under four main headings: development capacity, economic performance, tax and fiscal environment, and business vitality.

Performance Highlights and Targets

In 2002, Nova Scotia's business climate was ranked fourth in Canada—behind Alberta, Ontario, and British Columbia. The province's strengths included economic performance and tax and fiscal environment. The challenges identified were development capacity and business vitality. In the future, we will strive to maintain the position of best business climate in Atlantic Canada and increase our ranking nationally.

Measure: Working Time Lost Due to Strikes and Lockouts

Outcome: Stable business climate

This is a measure of labour stability, an important factor for economic development.

Performance Highlights and Targets

In 2001, 0.04 per cent of working time was lost because of strikes and lockouts in Nova Scotia. The national average for the same year was 0.07 per cent. Our target is to remain at or below the annual national average.

Measure: Oil and Gas Exploration Wells Drilled

Outcome: Economic growth

This is a measure of the average number of oil and gas exploration wells drilled in Nova Scotia's offshore over a five-year period. These wells are designed to discover additional oil and gas resources, as opposed to development wells put in place to recover resources already confirmed through exploration. Establishing new reserves will lead to new development projects and will enhance the attractiveness of the offshore area for further exploration and development activities.

Performance Highlights and Targets

Additional gas exploration is crucial to the future of the province's offshore oil and gas industry. From 1998 to 2002, an average of three wells per year were drilled. By 2004–2005, our target is to increase the number to eight exploration wells per year.

Measure: **Public/Private Capital Investment**

Outcome: Infrastructure that supports economic growth

This is a measure of the value of capital expenditures per person for new construction and machinery and equipment. Information on capital spending provides an indication of infrastructure capacity and market conditions in the economy.

Performance Highlights and Targets

In 2001, investment per person in Nova Scotia was $4,577, with revised intentions for 2002 being $5,248. Our goal is to increase investment per capita over time.

Measure: **International Roughness Index (IRI) for Highways**

Outcome: Infrastructure that supports economic growth

This is a standardized way of measuring the level of riding comfort on our highways, and the measure replaces the former Riding Comfort Index (RCI). Riding comfort is measured with a five-point "roughness scale, " where 0 is the smoothest ride, while 5 is considered unacceptable. A good-quality ride is defined as 1.6 by the National IRI Survey (2001).

Performance Highlights and Targets

Highway infrastructure contributes to economic growth. A well-maintained highway network helps industry to access new resources, facilitates the transport of raw materials and finished goods, and enables workers and consumers to reach the workplace and the market place. In 2002, the IRI rating for the province's 100-series highways was 1.48. Our target for 100-series highways is to stay below the National IRI Survey's standard of 1.6.

Measure: **Employment Rate**

Outcome: Improved economic activity

This is the percentage of the population (15 years and older) who are in the labour force and employed in part-time and full-time jobs.

Performance Highlights and Targets

In 2002, Nova Scotia's employment rate was 56.7 per cent, up from 56.3 per cent in 2001. Canada's employment rate for 2001 was 61.2 per cent. (The province's unemployment rate was 9.7 per cent for both 2002 and 2001.) Employment rates vary from one region of the province to another. Our aim is to monitor these rates and implement strategies to increase employment and reduce gaps that exist across regions.

4. Families and Communities

Government will help Nova Scotian families and their communities to become strong and self-sufficient in 2003–2004.

By investing in our criminal justice system, including work on the federal Youth Criminal Justice Act, government is working to keep Nova Scotia's crime rate below the national average. Construction of a new correctional facility in Yarmouth and improvements to court facilities across the province will contribute to making our communities safer. Government is also helping to ensure that our communities and work places are safe and secure by enhancing our ability to respond in an emergency.

Government will continue efforts to improve the highway system to make it safe for Nova Scotians and efficient for business. Government will once again increase investment in transportation infrastructure, and there will be further work to expand and upgrade 100-series highways and design and build up to six steel-truss bridges. A partnership between the police services and Motor Vehicle Compliance Officers is aimed at improving driver behaviour and vehicle safety.

Government will work to maintain the number of income assistance recipients eligible to participate in educational programs. The province is also investing in $15 million in our children through the five-year, federal/provincial/territorial Early Childhood Development Initiative.

Affordable housing will continue to be a priority. Government and its housing partners, including the federal government, will invest $37.3 million over five years.

Government works hard to build inclusive communities. An increase in the budget for Community Supports to Adults will help more adults with disabilities to integrate with the community. Government is also providing employability assistance to people with disabilities, including assessment services, career counselling, job search centres, and referrals to a large network of community-based service providers.

We value and celebrate our racial and cultural diversity and continue to enhance our relationship with Nova Scotia's Mi'kmaq, including continuing to negotiate gaming agreements that have brought Mi'kmaq communities $85.5 million in the last five years.

Families and Communities—Priorities 2003–2004

Self-sufficient Families and Children

Priority: Affordable Housing

In September 2002, Nova Scotia and the federal government signed a five-year $37.3-million Affordable Housing Program Agreement for the creation or renovation of up to 1,500 affordable homes. The agreement calls for $18.6 million in federal funding with matching contributions from the province and its housing partners.

The Department of Community Services has developed four housing programs under the agreement to address the housing needs of low- and moderate-income households in Nova Scotia: the New Rental Housing Initiative, the New Homeowner Program, the Rental Rehabilitation Program, and the Homeowner Rehabilitation Program. Construction of affordable housing projects under these programs will continue in 2003–2004. (Community Services)

Priority: Early Childhood Development

The province, through the Departments of Community Services and Health, is implementing a comprehensive and integrated childhood development strategy under a five-year, federal/provincial/territorial Early Childhood Development Initiative. From its inception in 2001 to March 31, 2003, $16.7 million has been invested in Nova Scotia's children. Investments include grants to create and expand child-care facilities resulting in over 400 new full- and part-day child-care spaces, stabilization grants to address recruitment and retention of staff, the Early Language and Learning strategy in 10 locations, direct supports for children with special needs, Child-Care Resource and Referral Programs to support parents, and an enhanced home visiting program by public health staff and lay home visitors. This initiative will continue in 2003–2004 with a further investment of $15.9 million of federal funding in these and other programs. (Community Services and Health)

Priority: Creating New Opportunities for Self-Sufficiency

On August 1, 2001, the Department of Community Services introduced the most significant change to Nova Scotia's welfare system in 30 years with a new employment support and income assistance system. The goal of the program is to help people become self-reliant, within their capacity to do so, by providing the right supports to increase their employability and level of independence. In 2003–2004, government will start to evaluate the changes made in 2001 to see how the Employment Support and Income Assistance Program is working and to identify opportunities for further improvement. (Community Services)

Priority: Leave for Palliative/Compassionate Care

As part of the 2003 First Ministers' Accord on Health Care, governments agreed that leave for compassionate care was necessary to support home care and end-of-life care for Canadians. The federal government will provide compassionate leave benefits for up to six weeks through the Employment Insurance (EI) system. The provincial role in this initiative (covering 90 per cent of the program impact) is protection of the individual's job through the leave provisions of the Labour Standards Code for the period that those individuals will be entitled to draw EI benefits plus an additional two weeks of unpaid leave to cover the EI waiting period. (Environment and Labour)

Inclusive Communities

Priority: Supporting Adults with Disabilities

Over the past several years the Department of Community Services has introduced improvements to the Community Supports for Adults Program. Two large adult residential centres have been closed, and a substantial number of residents have been transferred to smaller residential settings in communities near their families. To continue these improvements, a review of all aspects of the Community Supports for Adults Program—including access, assessment, licensing, and legislation—was started in 2002 and will continue through 2003. Community Services will work with Nova Scotians and other departments to develop an accessible, responsive, and sustainable system across Nova Scotia. (Community Services)

Priority: Support for Caregivers

The Advisory Council on the Status of Women is working with the Atlantic Centre of Excellence on Women's Health to research the effect of caregiving on women's health and economic status. In 2003–2004, research results, including recommendations on how to support caregivers, will be presented to women in diverse communities and to the federal and provincial governments. A major survey on how caregivers' health status is affected by combinations of paid work and unpaid caregiving goes into the field this fiscal year; results will be available in 2004–2005. The Healthy Balance Research Program is a five-year initiative. (Advisory Council on the Status of Women)

Priority: Supporting Aboriginal Peoples

Nova Scotia will continue negotiation of a Framework Agreement with the Mi'kmaq and the Government of Canada. This agreement will outline the process for treaty negotiations and will identify the substantive issues to be negotiated by the parties. Steps are also being taken to strengthen communications and ensure that the interests of stakeholders are understood throughout the negotiation process. (Aboriginal Affairs)

Government, in partnership with the Mi'kmaq and the Government of Canada, will develop and implement the Mi'kmaq Courtworker Program. This is part of the Mi'kmaq Legal Support Network, which supports justice programs and services for Nova Scotia's aboriginal community The courtworker program will assist and guide aboriginal people through the court system. (Aboriginal Affairs, Justice)

Government will put in place a new series of gaming agreements with First Nations to continue government's significant contribution to Mi'kmaq economic and community development. Over the last five years, these agreements have contributed approximately $85.5 million to Mi'kmaq communities. Currently, 11 of the 13 Mi'kmaq communities participate in these agreements. (Aboriginal Affairs)

Government will complete the implementation of an innovative program to provide a tax exemption to Status Indians for fuel purchases on reserves. This program uses drivers licenses and a unique point-of-sale system to provide the exemption required under the federal Indian Act. Government will also complete negotiations to settle the province's $20-million past liability for provincial fuel tax collected from Status Indians. (Aboriginal Affairs, Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations, Finance)

Government is also working with the Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq to draft a stewardship plan to protect the valuable and unique Mi'kmawey Debert archaeological site while developing a facility that can share the history and culture of the Mi'kmaq. Mi'kmawey Debert is especially important as a Paleo-Indian archaeological site dating back more than 10,000 years and has been designated as a National Historic Site and a Nova Scotia Special Place. (Tourism and Culture, Aboriginal Affairs)

Safe, Secure Communities

Priority: Enhanced Policing

Government will continue to develop a framework for the delivery of adequate and effective policing services by introducing a new Police Act, working with the Justice Learning Centre to coordinate training and enhance the skills and abilities of those responsible for police governance. (Justice)

Priority: Managing Domestic Violence

Government will work with police and others to manage domestic violence cases. A provincial protocol for a coordinated response will assist victims in high-risk domestic violence cases. Training for justice personnel is being provided through the Justice Learning Centre in keeping with the Russell Report. (Justice)

Priority: Improving Access to the Court System

Government continues to improve access to the justice system by enhancing system effectiveness to reduce the backlog of cases. Specifically, government is examining the impact of alternatives to the formal court system, assisting and educating self-represented litigants, and examining new technologies to improve system efficiencies.

Government is also investing in the infrastructure that supports the court system, including a new $9-million courthouse in Port Hawkesbury and modernization of facilities across the province. (Justice)

Priority: Improving Correctional Facilities

Government continues to ensure the safety and security of the network of correctional facilities throughout the province. Work in 2003–2004 will include the construction of a new $8.8-million correctional institution in Yarmouth, which replaces a 140-year-old structure. When the facility opens, it will have some 30 staff and an annual operating budget of $2.2 million. (Justice)

Priority: Legal Aid

Since 1996, the federal funding contribution for legal aid has continually declined, while the province has increased its funding by $2.2 million over the past seven years. This year, government will provide an additional $3-million grant to Nova Scotia Legal Aid, part of a total contribution of $12.6 million for legal aid this year. (Justice)

Priority: Youth Criminal Justice Act

This federal act comes into force on April 1, 2003. The key objectives of the Youth Criminal Justice Act are to restrict the use of courts and custody by increased emphasis on community-based alternatives at each phase of the justice system process, including restorative justice. Implementing the Youth Criminal Justice Act will require close collaboration between the Departments of Justice, Health, Education, and Community Services. (Justice, Public Prosecution, Office of Health Promotion, Health)

Priority: Highway Safety

Government is taking steps to improve safety on our highways, including a partnership between the Provincial Police Service and Motor Vehicle Compliance Officers. Other regulatory and program initiatives to improve driver behaviour and vehicle safety include a new collision-reporting system and measures to discourage impaired driving and encourage helmet usage. (Justice, Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations)

Government has been increasing investment in transportation infrastructure in recent years to offset previously inadequate funding. The Department of

Transportation and Public Works estimates that $340 million in capital funding will be needed in each of the next 10 years to properly maintain and upgrade our existing network of roads. Government will invest in improved highway infrastructure through completion of design, planning, and environmental approvals for expansion and upgrades to the province's 100-series highway system. In particular, pre-engineering and environmental work will continue on Highway 101 in Hants and Kings counties and on Highway 104 from New Glasgow to Sutherlands River. This pre-engineering and environmental work is planned to be completed in 2004. (Transportation and Public Works)

Government will also begin a steel-truss bridge replacement program with a goal of replacing or upgrading the 65 highest priority steel-truss bridges over the next five years. The goal for 2003–2004 is to put in place engineering design resources, develop different prefabricated designs, and build four to six structures to evaluate design types. (Transportation and Public Works)

Priority: Public Security and Safety

The government continues to enhance public security and safety by assisting municipal, provincial, and private-sector emergency managers in the design, implementation, and training of emergency plans to provide a prompt and coordinated response to a state of emergency. (Emergency Measures)

Government will add resources to the Emergency Measures Organization to address security for critical infrastructure and preparedness in the face of increased terrorist threats since September 11, 2001. (Emergency Measures)

Government is also taking steps to increase the speed and efficiency of the 911 emergency system by providing equipment, training, and procedures; test piloting the digital civic-address mapping system; and expanding the distance marker program on highways to help cell-phone users to pinpoint their location in an emergency. In 2003–2004, distance markers will be erected on Highway 104 from the New Brunswick border to Port Hastings. (Emergency Measures)

Priority: Workplace Safety

Government will participate in inter-jurisdictional initiatives to promote health and safety in the workplace. These initiatives will include the Atlantic Action Plan Initiative on Occupational Safety and Health under the auspices of the Council of Atlantic Premiers and the Cross-Canada Young Worker Initiative sponsored by the Canadian Association of Administrators of Labour Legislation (CAALL). This is a multi-faceted initiative designed to address the disproportionate incidence of workplace injuries experienced by young workers (one-third of all work injuries happen to workers aged 15–24). (Environment and Labour)

Priority: Support for Communities

Government will undertake initiatives, in co-operation with municipalities, to help Nova Scotia communities be self-sufficient. Provincial funding for municipal infrastructure helps to provide the physical capacity to support new growth, and equalization funding enables municipalities to remain financially viable. For 2003–2004, government will build on progress made in prior years by supporting implementation of new community-based transportation systems, supporting the completion of additional municipal drinking water supply protection plans, and committing a further 20 per cent (to a total of 95 per cent committed) of funding under the Canada–Nova Scotia Infrastructure Program. (Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations)

Families and Communities—Measuring Our Performance

Measure: **Income Assistance Recipients Securing Employment**

Outcome: Strong families, children reaching their potential

Many people who receive income assistance are successful in obtaining work. Their earnings help to reduce the amount of their income assistance entitlement or allow them to exit the income assistance program. This measure builds on the one used in the 2002–2003 business plan. The revised measure indicates the percentage of individuals deemed appropriate for employment who have secured full- or part-time work. (Community Services)

Performance Highlights and Targets

In 2001–2002, 34 per cent of income assistance recipients deemed appropriate for employment had secured full- or part-time work. Our target is to increase this number by 5 per cent by 2004–2005.

Measure: **Income Assistance Recipients Participating in Approved Educational Programs**

Outcome: Strong families, children reaching their potential

Many income assistance recipients are trying to develop their skills and personal potential, which will help them to prepare for work and to participate in their communities. This measure builds on the one used in the 2002–2003 business plan. The revised measure indicates the percentage of individuals who actually participated in approved educational programs—out of all income assistance recipients who were eligible to participate. (Community Services)

Performance Highlights and Targets

In 2001–2002, 43 per cent of income assistance recipients who were eligible to participate in educational programs had, in fact, participated in approved educational and skills training programs. We will work to maintain or increase this percentage in the future.

Measure: **Children Living in Low-Income Households**

Outcome: Strong families, children reaching their potential

Statistics Canada calculates the income level at which a family may experience hardship because a greater portion of its income must be spent on the basic necessities. This is referred to as the Low-income Cut-off (LICO), and this measure uses LICOs after taxes–based data. (Community Services)

Performance Highlights and Targets

In 2000, 11.4 per cent of children were living in low-income households in Nova Scotia, compared with 11.3 per cent in 1999. (The 1999 LICO was revised by Statistics Canada, so the data have been revised accordingly.) The objective is to lower this percentage.

Measure: ***Overall Crime Rate***

Outcome: Safe communities

The crime rate is a key indicator of social and economic well-being within a society. It indicates how many criminal incidents have been reported to the police for violent, property, drug, and other offences, excluding Criminal Code traffic offences. The number is standardized per 100,000 of the population so we can compare the rates across communities. (Justice)

Performance Highlights and Targets

In 2001, there were 7,637 criminal incidents per 100,000 people—a rate that is lower than the national figure of 7,747 criminal incidents per 100,000. Maintaining Nova Scotia's crime rate below the national average is our target for the future.

Measure: **Highway Injuries**

Outcome: Safe communities

This is a measure of the number of fatalities and injuries per 10,000 motor vehicles registered. The casualty rate is affected by a number of factors, including the driver, the vehicle, enforcement, education, and engineering. We use the casualty rate as an indicator of whether and how well government's programs are contributing to improved highway safety. (Transportation and Public Works)

Performance Highlights and Targets

In 2001, the casualty rate per 10,000 motor vehicles registered in Nova Scotia was 109.39—down from 123.9 in 2000. Nova Scotia's casualty rate was lower than the national rate of 123.7 in 2001 and 122.8 in 2000. Working with various groups, our aim is to continually decrease the casualty rate on Nova Scotia's highways.

5. The Environment

Nova Scotia's environment is essential to the health, prosperity, and self-sufficiency of our province. The Government of Nova Scotia and its citizens must work together to protect Nova Scotia's natural resources and contribute to international efforts to conserve energy and control climate change.

Government has programs and initiatives under way this year both to preserve our environment and to address some long-standing environmental problems.

We are working with the federal and municipal governments to provide infrastructure to protect our water and manage waste. Government's Drinking Water Strategy, released in October 2002, addresses the critical issues of protecting our water supply sources and keeping them clean, ensuring that water is safe to drink, and proving that our water is safe through monitoring and testing. The strategy includes a three-year action plan, which will continue in 2003–2004.

Nova Scotia's Energy Strategy addresses air emission reduction targets for sulphur dioxide, nitrogen oxide, and mercury to protect the environment and human health. We will continue to work with major facilities to develop emission plans to meet targets. Government is committed to meeting our responsibilities under the Kyoto Protocol on climate change.

Government will implement an Integrated Food Safety Program as part of the Agricultural Policy Framework with the federal government. In addition, an Environmental Monitoring Plan and the new National Aquatic Animal Health Program will help ensure animal health and food safety of the aquaculture sector.

Government will also implement a Code of Forest Practice to protect our forest resources. We will acquire land to protect sensitive wilderness areas.

The clean-up of the Sydney tar ponds and coke ovens site has been studied extensively, and the citizens of Cape Breton now have the chance to comment on options for finishing the project. The Governments of Nova Scotia and Canada will support plans to clean up the Sydney tar ponds and former coke ovens sites.

The Environment—Priorities 2003–2004

Priority: Drinking Water Strategy

Government will address the critical issue of safe drinking water through implementation of Nova Scotia's Drinking Water Strategy. This year, government will work with municipalities to renew and standardize all water system approvals to verify that each is capable of achieving current environmental standards. This will include identifying the need for operator training, developing a program for compliance monitoring of public drinking water systems, and applying standard enforcement and reporting protocols. (Environment and Labour)

Priority: Municipal Drinking Water Infrastructure

Government will continue to improve the quality of drinking water by providing funding for water transmission systems under the Canada–Nova Scotia Infrastructure Program. (Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations)

Priority: Water Resource Management Agriculture and Fisheries Sectors

Work continues on the development and implementation of a sustainable water management framework to address water quality and quantity for the agriculture and the fishery sectors, including laboratory accreditation protocols for testing water. (Agriculture and Fisheries)

Priority: Air Emission Targets

Government will amend the Air Quality Regulations in order to meet the sulphur dioxide emission reduction targets outlined in Nova Scotia's Energy Strategy. Government will work with major facilities to develop plans that address provincial commitments to meet Canada-wide standards for particulate matter and ozone. (Energy, Environment and Labour)

Priority: Forest Strategy

During 2003–2004, government will develop a Code of Forest Practice to guide forest management operations as part of the Forest Strategy. The first part of the code, a framework document of high-level principles, will be presented for public review and comment. Following public consultation, guidelines and technical manuals will be developed. (Natural Resources)

Priority: Acquiring Public Land

In 2003–2004, government will continue to add to the provincially owned land base by acquiring land with significant recreational and ecological values, such as coastal properties, private holdings surrounded by wilderness areas, and wetlands. Government will partner with non-government organizations, such as the Nature Conservancy of Canada, to obtain land valued by Nova Scotians. In 2002–2003, $1 million was invested to support land acquisitions. In addition, $5 million was invested to acquire the Cape Split property. (Natural Resources, Environment and Labour)

Priority: Integrated Food Safety Program

Government will implement the Food Safety pillar of the Agricultural Policy Framework Agreement and provide a quality evaluation service for industry in product standards, food safety, education, research, and analytical testing. This includes revised meat inspection regulations, laboratory services accreditation with the Standards Council of Canada, support for on-farm safety and quality standards, and food safety education programs. In addition, the 2002 Memorandum of Understanding with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency will be implemented. (Agriculture and Fisheries)

Priority: Fishery—Aquaculture

Government will implement an Environmental Monitoring Plan for the aquaculture sector in conjunction with the Aquaculture Association of Nova Scotia. Government will also participate in the development of the new National Aquatic Animal Health Program for the aquaculture industry and continue participation on a joint project with the University of Prince Edward Island to graduate new fish veterinarians. (Agriculture and Fisheries)

Priority: Farm Environmental Risk Management

Government will implement the Agriculture Policy Framework (APF), which provides a framework for addressing environmental risk as it relates to agriculture. This is a long-range effort that involves scientific research, development and application of innovative technologies, and the adoption of best practices and recognized standards. In 2003–2004, government will accelerate environmental farm planning with additional funding of $500,000. This money will place more people in the field to assist farmers with their environmental plans. As well, government will move forward on the development of nutrient-management training by providing funding from the Farm Investment Fund. (Agriculture and Fisheries)

Priority: Sydney Tar Ponds

Technical experts have presented options for cleaning up the Sydney tar ponds and coke ovens. The options include more than 20 different technologies that have proven successful in cleaning up sites of comparable size and complexity. The Joint Action Group (JAG) will consult with Cape Breton Regional Municipality (CBRM) residents in spring 2003 on their choice of plan to clean up the tar ponds and former coke ovens sites. In late May, JAG will present a clean-up recommendation to governments based on this community consultation. (Sydney Tar Ponds Agency, Sydney Environmental Resources)

Priority: Waste and Sewage Disposal

The Government of Nova Scotia will contribute $32 million over 15 years to the Halifax Harbour Solutions Project, which includes two pieces of property in Dartmouth valued at $2 million. Payments in any year will be contingent on budgetary approval and expenditures made by HRM. The province will also be providing financial support to similar projects in Sydney, Lunenburg, and other locations in the future under the Canada–Nova Scotia Infrastructure Agreement. (Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations)

Priority: Kyoto Protocol

Government will continue to be active in the national process to determine burden sharing and provincial obligations following ratification of the Kyoto Protocol. It is important to maintain competitiveness for Nova Scotia industry and to recognize actions that have already been taken by Nova Scotia industry to reduce emissions. As more becomes known on the specifics of Nova Scotia's obligations, adjustments will be made to the provincial Climate Change Strategy. Existing priorities in the Climate Change Strategy include substitutions to lower carbon fuels, promotion of renewable energy, and a continuation of a wide variety of energy-efficiency measures. (Energy, Environment and Labour)

Priority: Climate Change Research

Government will continue climate change research aimed at understanding how climate influences agricultural production. (Agriculture and Fisheries)

Environment—Measuring Our Performance

Measure: **Drinking Water Quality**

Outcome: Healthy environment

This measure tracks the proportion of the population (served by municipal water supplies) that is receiving water meeting the health-based criteria for bacteria, as stated in the Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality. The measure has been revised to improve accuracy and to reflect recent changes made to the guidelines. The baseline (2001) has been recalculated using this improved methodology. (Environment and Labour)

Performance Highlights and Targets

More than half of Nova Scotians (54 per cent) are served by municipal water supplies. In 2001, 96.5 per cent of this group received water that met the criteria for bacteriological quality (as stated in the Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality). Maximizing the percentage of the population served by municipal water supplies that meet these criteria is our ongoing goal.

Measure: **Sulphur Dioxide Emissions**

Outcome: Healthy environment

Sulphur dioxide (SO_2) is a prevalent and harmful air contaminant. The quantity of SO_2 emitted is considered a major determining factor for clean air. (Environment and Labour)

Performance Highlights and Targets

In 2001, 164,000 tonnes of SO_2 were emitted in the province, down from 170,000 tonnes in 2000. This measure is heavily dependent on changes made (or not made) by large industries in the province. We will work with these industries to reduce the emissions to 142,000 tonnes per year by 2005.

Measure: **Solid Waste Diversion**

Outcome: Healthy environment

Community participation in environmental management is an important factor in achieving a healthy environment. This measure tracks the number of solid waste regions (out of seven regions in the province) achieving a diversion rate of 50 per cent or more. (Environment and Labour)

Performance Highlights and Targets

Nova Scotia has set some of the most progressive waste reduction targets in Canada. As of 2000–2001, two out of seven regions have reached a diversion rate of 50 per cent. These two regions comprise 48 per cent of the population, so this is no small accomplishment. We will strive to reach a 50 per cent diversion rate in all seven solid waste regions by 2004–2005.

Measure: **Environmental Farm Plans**

Outcome: Sustainable environment

The number of farmers with environmental farm plans in place is expressed as a percentage of all registered farmers under the Nova Scotia Farm Registration Act. Increasing the number of farms with environmental farm plans will result in conservation and sustainable development of soil, water, air, and biodiversity resources. (Agriculture and Fisheries)

Performance Highlights and Targets

In 2000–2001, 4 per cent of farmers had environmental farm plans in place, and our target is 20 per cent by 2004–2005. Environment is one of the five pillars within the new Agricultural Policy Framework Agreement (APF). The Accelerated Environmental Farm Planning Initiative, a component of the APF, may help us exceed our projected target.

Measure: **Long-range Management Frameworks (Crown Land)**
Outcome: Sustainable environment

Long-range management frameworks are being developed to ensure effective management of Crown land. The frameworks are ecologically based land-use planning documents that will reflect the goals and values for each eco-district. This is a measure of our progress in getting the frameworks in place. (Natural Resources)

Performance Highlights and Targets

While no long-range management frameworks are in place to date, a pilot project is under way to develop a process for preparing the frameworks for the province's 39 eco-districts. Our target is to have up to 50 per cent of Crown land covered by long-range management frameworks by 2004–2005.

Measure: **Endangered and Threatened Species Recovery Plans**
Outcome: Sustainable environment

The province is committed to the conservation and protection of species at risk. This is a measure of the percentage of endangered species with recovery plans in place within a year of being listed as an endangered species and of threatened species with recovery plans in place within two years of being listed as a threatened species. (Natural Resources)

Performance Highlights and Targets

As of March 31, 2002, there were 10 species listed as endangered and 2 species listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. Recovery plans are now in place for 11 of these species, with a draft plan available for the remaining species. By 2005, our target is to have recovery plans completed and in place for all species listed under the Endangered Species Act as endangered (in 2004) and threatened (in 2003).

Measure: **Silviculture (Private and Industrial Lands)**

Outcome: Sustainable environment

Government monitors wood harvesting through a Registry of Wood Buyers and forecasts long-term wood supply by incorporating both harvesting and silviculture data. Regulations also require a buyer to conduct silviculture activity in proportion to the harvest on private and industrial land. Meeting the level of silviculture required to be compliant ensures the long-term sustainability of the wood supply. (Natural Resources)

Performance Highlights and Targets

Maintaining an adequate level of silviculture will provide for future supplies of wood on private woodlots and industrial lands. Registered buyers met or exceeded 100 per cent of their obligations for carrying out silviculture in 2001. Our target is to maintain 100 per cent compliance in 2004–2005.

6. Government Services

The Government of Nova Scotia has made considerable progress in the last three years on improving the effectiveness and efficiency of government programs and services. Every year, government must respond to changing needs so that citizens receive services that are relevant and high quality.

Efforts have focused on

- improving the quality of and access to the government services and information that Nova Scotians use every day, either in person or on line
- putting systems in place to streamline government operations, ensure accountability for money spent, and reduce red tape

In 2003–2004, government will further strengthen its planning, budgeting, evaluation, and accountability processes to ensure that expected program and service results are defined, resources are provided to achieve expected results, and results are fully reported.

Government programs are delivered by dedicated public servants. A priority for government in the 2003–2004, and in the coming years, is to foster working conditions that will attract and keep good employees.

Government Services—Priorities 2003–2004

Priority: Consumer Protection

Concerns about the cost of automobile insurance are growing in Nova Scotia, as they are elsewhere in Canada. Government has released a discussion paper outlining options for addressing Nova Scotians' concerns about auto insurance and is seeking their input. Government will appoint an auto insurance consumer advocate to assist in the public discussion. The advocate will provide outreach to consumer groups, seniors, and others affected by this issue and bring a consumer perspective to the policy options under consideration. (Environment and Labour)

Priority: Financial and Resource Management Systems

Government will continue implementation of the SAP enterprise resource planning tool and assist in making the financial software component available to municipalities, school boards, and other sectors. SAP's finance and procurement modules are in place. A project is under way to implement the human resources and payroll modules in government and school boards. This is due for completion in 2004–2005. School boards are also implementing the SAP plant maintenance module for their facilities and transportation management needs. (Office of Economic Development, Finance, Public

Service Commission, Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations)

Priority: E-procurement

Government will develop an electronic procurement (e-procurement) action plan to define priorities for e-procurement projects of greatest benefit to the government as well as for municipalities, universities, schools, and hospitals. (Transportation and Public Works)

Priority: Government IT Services

The Data Centre maintains key provincial data systems such as the Human Resources Management System, the Registry of Motor Vehicles, and the Provincial Assessment System. Government will assess current and future Data Centre needs for the storage and management of electronic information and develop a request for proposals for those requirements. (Transportation and Public Works, Office of Economic Development)

Priority: Public Service Commission Restructuring

Government will implement the recommendations of a project to improve human resource management in government. This will involve structural and cultural changes at the Public Service Commission, defining and assigning clear human resource roles and responsibilities, and promoting effective human resource management by line managers. (Public Service Commission)

Priority: Succession Management Strategy

To ensure that key positions in government are filled by qualified workers, government will develop a corporate succession management strategy that will focus on youth recruitment, development of employees for key management positions, and better tools to support recruitment, training, and development. For 2003–2004, the focus will be on executive leadership, human resource, finance, and young professionals. (Public Service Commission)

Priority: Internal Communications

Government will continue development of systems, processes, and tools for improved internal employee communications. This will include promotion of best practices and enhancements to on-line communications tools. (Treasury and Policy Board)

Priority: Web-site Improvements

Government will implement a project to guide improvements to the government's Web site, including design and branding, content management, and technical systems. The focus for the 2003–2004 fiscal year will be implementing technology to enhance navigation and presentation on the Web site. (Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations, with many others)

Priority: Red Tape Reduction

The Red Tape Reduction Task Force has been working to streamline and reduce unnecessary regulations, such as registrations, inspections, licences, permits, reporting, and certification. In 2002–2003, 35 acts and 112 regulations were reviewed, and systems were introduced to make regulatory reform and red tape reduction an integral part of government operations. Certain departments and agencies submit red tape reduction plans as part of their annual business plans and report on outcomes in meeting red tape reduction goals in their annual accountability reports. Red tape reduction will continue to be a priority for all government departments and agencies. (All departments and agencies)

Priority: Regulatory Policy Development

Government will develop a policy framework to achieve greater consistency, effectiveness, and transparency in the management of regulatory processes administered by the Department of Environment and Labour. The objectives are to create a model for regulatory management that supports better-informed decision making on whether and how to regulate, to achieve a more effective mix of regulatory and non-regulatory tools, and to improve the cost-effectiveness of our regulatory programs. (Environment and Labour)

Government will examine the Business Electronic Filing Act to improve security and authentication requirements for e-government, the Companies Act to address outdated requirements, and the Co-operative Associations Act dealing with issuance of preferred shares. (Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations)

Priority: Improved Access to Service

Government will identify and develop services feasible for electronic service delivery. More licences, permits, and application processes will be handled by Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations through the Nova Scotia Business Registry (NSBR) in order to improve access and provide multiple payment options for clients, while decreasing transaction costs for government. (Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations)

Priority: Land Registration

Government will expand implementation of the new land registration system, which guarantees land ownership information recorded on the system and provides electronic access to land information. From the initial implementation site in Colchester County, several more counties will implement the system in 2003–2004, providing improved electronic access to land information, including municipal tax data, civic addresses, and Crown land information. (Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations)

Priority: Access to Heritage Resources

Government will continue to improve public access to archive and museum resources by expanding and enhancing on-line services. This will promote public awareness and appreciation of the province's heritage, support educational curriculum development, and enhance the province's attractiveness as a tourism destination. Priorities include a departmental on-line heritage image gallery and on-line public access to archival resources, including virtual exhibits, resource guides, schooner Bluenose and Lunenburg's 250th anniversary material, Acadian church registers (1702–55), and a searchable database of pre-1900 land petitions. (Tourism and Culture)

Priority: Business Planning, Budget and Accountability Framework

Government will develop a framework to connect the planning, budgeting, and accountability components of the performance cycle, including environmental scanning, operational planning, performance measures, and evaluation. The framework will be published in the management manual along with user guides for department and agency staff. (Treasury and Policy Board, Finance)

Priority: Evaluation Policy

Consistent evaluation practices will contribute to government's commitment to greater accountability and continuous improvements in policy development and program design and delivery. Developing a corporate evaluation policy will be a multi-year project. By March 31, 2004, the policy development process will be in place, together with an assessment of government's evaluation capacity and research on best practices for the evaluation of government services. (Treasury and Policy Board)

Government Services—Measuring Our Performance

Measure: **Business Planning**

Outcome: Open and accountable government

Business plans promote pubic accountability and provide a benchmark against which results can be assessed. This measure indicates the percentage of government departments, public service votes, and Crown corporations completing business plans each fiscal year.

Performance Highlights and Targets

In 2002–2003 and 2001–2002, 100 per cent of government entities (that is, departments, public service votes, and Crown corporations listed in the Business Planning Guidelines) completed business plans. Our aim is to maintain this level of compliance in future years.

Measure: **Customer Satisfaction**

Outcome: Accessible government

Measuring the expectations and experiences of the people using government services provides valuable information about how to improve the delivery and quality of these services. This measure focuses on services made available through Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations. (Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations)

Performance Highlights and Targets

In 2001, the overall satisfaction with the services of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations was 89 per cent. Our target is a 90 per cent satisfaction rate.

Government
BUSINESS PLAN
FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2003-2004

Part Two
Department Business Plans

Agriculture and Fisheries

Mission

To foster prosperous and sustainable agriculture and fisheries industries through the delivery of quality public services for the betterment of rural and coastal communities and of all Nova Scotians.

Strategic Goals

Agriculture and Fisheries is committed to supporting the Government of Nova Scotia's corporate goals and priorities:

- Healthy Nova Scotians–improve service delivery, build the foundation for the future, and respond to urgent priority needs.
- Educated and Confident Nova Scotians–focus on the basics and support for students in the early years.
- Self-sufficient and Prosperous Nova Scotians–support the foundation for economic growth, ensure the participation of all Nova Scotians, and engender confidence in our ability to prosper.

In accordance with its mission and legislated mandate, the department will strive to achieve the following goals:

- Sustainable and environmentally responsible development of Nova Scotia's agriculture and fishing industries.
- A competitive business climate that encourages economic growth and increases jobs in Nova Scotia's rural and coastal communities.
- Orderly development of agriculture, aquaculture, and fisheries through a regulatory regime that supports business and sector growth and development and ensures consumer confidence and food safety.
- A globally competitive Nova Scotia workforce through education, training, research, and community services.
- Public services that are accountable and serve to meet identified industry needs.

Core Business Areas

1. Sustainable Resource Management

The department's approach to sustainable resource management balances industry development with environmental and social responsibility through applied research, technology transfer, generally accepted management practices, and industry/public awareness.

Departmental activities in this core business are designed to move our agriculture and fishing industries closer to a state where the three principles of sustainability—economically viable, environmentally sound, and socially acceptable—are in balance. In order to get there, the department will work with industry to promote standards of environmental stewardship among business operators. The department will also work to ensure that freshwater fish stocks and habitat are well managed and sufficiently protected so that anglers and nature lovers can continue to enjoy Nova Scotia's natural beauty. Education will be key in raising the industries' awareness of environmental issues and the public's appreciation of the resource industries. Together, these efforts will help to sustain prosperity in agriculture, aquaculture, and the fishery and secure the future of the communities that rely on these industries.

Major program/activities encompass the following:

- agriculture resource stewardship and advisory services, including
    - agriculture field services
    - land protection
    - integrated pest management
    - environmental farm planning (soil, nutrient and manure management)
- AgraPoint, an alternative mechanism for delivering extension and advisory services to the agriculture sector
- water resource management for the agriculture, aquaculture, and fisheries sectors
- aquaculture development and extension services
- inland fisheries resource management
- marine advisory services, field services, and coastal zone management.

2. Industry Growth and Development

In this area the department focuses on Nova Scotia's rural and coastal communities by investing in industry stability, new economic opportunities, and strategic development partnerships.

Today's business climate is highly dynamic and increasingly globalized. Industry needs to be responsive to global trends in order to remain competitive. Nova Scotia's agriculture and fisheries industries have been evolving and adapting to broad trends—moving from a focus on primary production toward increased diversity in primary production, value-added products, greater export value, and a strong base in scientific research, technology, and innovation. Programs and services in this core business area are designed to assist Nova Scotia's agricultural and fishing industries compete effectively in a highly competitive and global marketplace. The department assists industry to seize opportunities to innovate, diversify, add value to, and improve the quality of their products. Tourism is important to Nova Scotia, and the department is enhancing the sportfishing sector and looking at new opportunity areas, such as agri- and aqua-tourism. At the same time, the department recognizes the importance of stability in the business environment so that industry can manage risk and carry out long-range planning.

Major program/activities include the following:

- integrated risk management programs to support income stabilization in the agriculture sector
- sector investment, including credit and financing services
- industry development, including
  - development of new commercial fisheries
  - marketing and trade services
  - product development and quality evaluation, including value-added production
  - business management and economic analyses
  - freshwater fish stocking
- research, technology, and innovation development for the agri-food, fishery, and aquaculture industries through public/private partnerships.

3. Responsible Governance

In this area the department focuses on the orderly development of the industries through supportive legislative/regulatory frameworks, including licensing and leasing of developmental operations.

Departmental efforts in this core business area are directed toward developing a legislative and regulatory environment that supports business, protects consumers, and minimizes impacts to the environment from resource development activity. To achieve this long-range goal, the department ensures that legislation and regulations enable business development, that they are consistent and treat businesses equitably, and that they are not unnecessarily burdensome for business operators. An effective regulatory climate must also protect consumers and help to ensure safe food. To this end, the department supports better product labelling, traceability, and adoption of recognized standards of food quality. Initiatives aimed at promoting proper food handling will minimize the risk of food-borne illnesses and increase consumer confidence in commercial food establishments. Illegal fishing activities undermine the livelihood of legitimate commercial fish harvesters, and the department will continue to work with federal partners to address this pressing issue. The department licenses and leases activities in aquaculture development and marine plant harvesting.

Major programs/activities include the following:

- enforcement of regulations governing licensed operations and mandated activities
- legislative and information management services
- licensing of fish plants and buyers, retail food outlets and restaurants
- issuance of agricultural permits and licences (fur and game farms), and farm registration
- licensing and management of marine plants
- aquaculture licensing/leasing
- coordination of regulated marketing boards for the agriculture sector
- evaluation of food quality and safety
- animal health and disease prevention.

4. Lifelong Learning (Education, Training, Skill Development)

This area focuses on sustaining expertise and excellence in Nova Scotia's agricultural, agri-food, and aquaculture industries and on preparing Nova Scotians for a global labour market through teaching, research, and community services.

The department, through the Nova Scotia Agriculture College (NSAC), offers a broad range of post-secondary educational programs, training, and research for the agriculture and aquaculture industries. The NSAC is the centre of agriculture research and innovation for the Atlantic region. Major focus areas for academic and applied research include climate change, organic farming, product quality enhancement, water-quality and resource management, and soil and farm waste management. The NSAC is unique in its work on bio-products and potato, blueberry, carrot, and fur animal (mink) research, which it conducts in partnership with the private sector. These and other activities are vital for stability and sustained growth in our agriculture and aquaculture sectors. The 4-H program focuses on agricultural awareness and provides rural youth with leadership and other lifelong skills development.

Priorities for 2003–2004

1. Sustainable Resource Management

Priority: Strengthen environmental risk management

This priority focuses on strengthening the ability of client groups to deal with environmental issues and reduce risks as they pertain to resource development. This is a long-range effort that involves scientific research, development, and application of innovative technology, as well as adoption of best practices and recognized standards. The Agriculture Policy Framework (APF), which will be implemented in fiscal 2003–04, provides the framework for addressing environmental risk management as it relates to agriculture.

Strategic actions include the following:

- Accelerate Environmental Farm Planning (EFP) in accordance with the broader Agriculture Policy Framework Implementation Agreement. The EFP builds on scientific research and innovative technology and incorporates nutrient management planning, revised manure management guidelines, and on-farm water management.
- Apply climate change research that has been under way at NSAC to the farm level by encouraging adoption of new technology and best practices aimed at meeting targets for green house gas reductions.
- Implement the Environmental Monitoring Plan for the aquaculture sector in conjunction with the Aquaculture Association of Nova Scotia.
- Participate in the development of a new national aquatic animal health program for the aquaculture industry, and participate on a joint project with the University of Prince Edward Island (UPEI) to graduate new fish veterinarians.
- Encourage adoption of environmental farm management by strengthening the linkages between departmental programs and agriculture practices.

Priority: Resolve resource-use conflicts and challenges

The department will continue efforts to balance the needs of the agricultural and aquaculture sectors for access to water resources with concerns of sportfishing, wildlife and community groups. There continues to be a need to address concerns from the commercial fishery regarding oil and gas development in offshore and near-shore waters.

Activities to meet this priority include the following:

- Implement phase 2 of the Water Management Strategy, designed to address issues of water quality and quantity for both the agriculture and fishery sectors.
- Organize a fact-finding mission with Department of Energy and industry representatives to countries that have a successful fishery and oil/gas industry to learn from their experiences.

Priority: Enhance public awareness of industries

The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries works in a highly dynamic business environment that require an ability to evolve and modernize with changing times. In addition to marketing initiatives to promote Nova Scotian seafood and agri-food products, the department is engaged in activities to increase public awareness of the importance of agriculture and fisheries to Nova Scotia's economy.

In fiscal 2003–04, the department will

- Partner to implement strategies that increase public awareness and appreciation of agriculture, aquaculture, and fisheries, including the Brand Nova Scotia Initiative, Taste of Nova Scotia Programs, the annual Aquaculture Harvest Festival, and 4-H and agricultural awareness activities.
- Continue to engage in sustainable community initiatives with coastal and rural communities through its regional field services.

Priority: Manage inland fisheries resources

The department will continue to manage this resource according to principles of conservation with the objective of improving opportunities for recreational fishing and protecting stocks for long-term sustainability.

Actions for 2003–04 include the following:

- Finalize two federal/provincial memorandums of understanding (MOUs) on freshwater fish habitat and recreational fisheries.

Major Partnering Links

Federal: Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Environment Canada, Northern and Indian Affairs Canada, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency

Provincial/municipal/inter-provincial: Departments of Natural Resources, Environment and Labour, Justice, Health, and Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations, the Office of Economic Development, municipal agencies, governments of the Atlantic provinces

Industry/NGOs: Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture, agricultural commodity groups, Seafood Producers Association of Nova Scotia, Nova Scotia Fish Packers Association, Aquaculture Association of Nova Scotia, commercial fishermen's associations, sportfishery associations, private veterinary practitioners, community groups

2. Industry Growth and Development

Priority: Develop a strategic plan focused on economic growth

In 2002–03, the department initiated planning to develop a 'signature strategy' to build on Nova Scotia's economic growth strategy, *Opportunities For Prosperity*, and enhance the component related to sustainable resource development as it relates to agriculture and fisheries. The work undertaken in 2002–03 has assisted in the preparation of the 2003–04 Business Plan and branch operational plans. Work will continue on this initiative in 2003–04. The final strategic document will incorporate and support the priorities described below.

Priority: Reduce and manage agricultural risks

This priority focuses on improving long-term stability and self-sufficiency in the agriculture sector by strengthening the capacity of the agricultural industry to reduce and manage risks more strategically, including market, environmental, financial, and weather-related risks. The five strategic pillars of the Agriculture Policy Framework Agreement–Environment, Business Risk

Management, Food Safety and Food Quality, Renewal, and Science and Innovation–work together to enhance the industry's ability to better manage risks.

Actions for fiscal 2003–04 include the following:

- Implement the APF Agreement through the formal signing of a federal/provincial APF Implementation Agreement. The agreement includes a new generation of business risk management program designed to reduce and manage risks affecting income and crop production.

Priority: Advocate for a fair share of marine resources for Nova Scotia

Canada's marine resources are managed by the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO). Agriculture and Fisheries advocates for Nova Scotia's interests through participation on interjurisdictional committees and government/industry resource advisory groups. The department participates on national policy initiatives addressing the oceans and fishery resources. It maintains an ongoing working relationship with DFO, other provincial fisheries and aquaculture departments, and the Nova Scotia fishing industry to address issues of resource access and management. These and other activities have led to increased access to resources such as snow crab, as well as development of new fisheries for silver hake, Jonah crab, and sharks.

Activities for 2003–04 include the following:

- Participate in a review of northern cod resources and prepare contingency plans if this fishery is closed due to poor stock recovery.

Priority: Diversify, expand, and add value in primary and secondary production

This priority supports the potential for new economic opportunities and is key to achieving the goal of industry growth and job creation. The department works with industry partners to design and implement projects that will expand, diversify, and add value to Nova Scotian products and services.

Activities for fiscal 2003–04 include the following:

- Work with government and industry partners to implement strategies aimed at development of value-added products, organic farming (with emphasis on pork and apples), Nova Scotian wine, and the tree fruit sector.

- Pursue new opportunities for expanded snow-crab processing in Cape Breton and aquaculture development in Guysborough County.
- Work with the Canadian Council of Fisheries and Aquaculture Ministers (CCFAM) on national efforts to promote sportfishing and establish a national marketing campaign with industry partners "Catch Fish".
- Complete 20 joint government/ industry initiatives that address targeted barriers to commercialization and new product development.
- Implement a new business strategy for AgriTECH Park, positioning this facility as a bio-economy village focused on environment, food safety, and science and innovation.
- Continue life-science research at the NSAC on development of new "functional foods".
- Implement the Entrepreneurial and Opportunities Development Initiative as part of the APF Agreement. This initiative is designed to improve business management and planning skills in the agriculture sector through training and other services.

Priority: Increase domestic and export sales

Exporting offers substantial opportunities for growth. Nova Scotia's proximity to the highly lucrative US market gives it a clear advantage. However, the department is working with industry to grow export markets around the world. Although Nova Scotia has a relatively small internal market, there are opportunities to increase sales of Nova Scotian seafood and agri-food products domestically. Seamless access to marketing/trade information and technical expertise is becoming increasingly important for clients, and the department needs to look at opportunities for optimizing its resources to better service the industries.

Activities for 2003–04 include the following:

- Advance the Brand Nova Scotia initiative, which will include building on the success of the Taste of Nova Scotia Programs and implementation of six pilot projects.
- Continue to develop and implement federal and provincial market/trade strategies with industry stakeholders, targeting the northeastern United States, the European Union, Japan, and China.

- Complete and enhance the pilot international business and product development project for the Japanese market.
- Continue to build on the success of Nova Scotia's boatbuilding industry and increase export sales.
- Lead and evaluate 25 market development projects in domestic and international markets.
- Develop and increase opportunities for sale in the domestic food service market with an emphasis on public sector purchasing agencies and groups.
- Complete the Cumberland County Food in Schools pilot program.

Priority: Optimize the department's investment capacity in accordance with the Nova Scotia Investment Framework

This priority addresses the need to optimize the department's investment capacity and improve our ability to evaluate and manage investment opportunities, including those related to innovation and revitalization. This needs to be done in accordance with the Nova Scotia Investment Framework, which sets out a strategic approach that clusters resources to enhance effectiveness.

Activities to meet this priority include the following:

- Implement the new Investment Plan for Nova Scotia's Agri-food and Fisheries Sectors.
- Implement the New Opportunities Business Development and Investment Initiative as part of the APF Agreement. This initiative is designed to increase strategic investment in the agriculture sector.
- Increase the department's capacity to provide timely, comprehensive economic analyses of business and investment opportunities for both the agriculture and fisheries sectors.
- Continue to provide lending services through the Farm Loan Board and the Fisheries and Aquaculture Loan Board, and implement an enhanced financial management system for the two boards.
- Continue the New Entrants to Agriculture Loan Program.
- Implement the new Market Opportunity Loan Programs for the beef and Nova Scotia tree fruit industries aimed at revitalizing these sectors.

Major Linkages

Federal: Canadian Farm Business Management Council, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade

(DFAIT)/Industry Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada; Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA), Investment Partnerships Canada, Trade Team Nova Scotia/Canada

Provincial/municipal/interprovincial: Departments of Tourism and Culture, Environment and Labour, Office of Economic Development, Nova Scotia Business Inc., governments of the Atlantic provinces, regional tourism and development agencies, municipal agencies

Industry/NGOs: Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture, Atlantic Trade Partnership, Canadian Council of Grocery Distributors, fish processor associations, Nova Scotia Boat Builders Association, Aquaculture Association of Nova Scotia, Taste of Nova Scotia Programs, restaurant and food services associations and groups, Atlantic Canada Organic Regional Network (ACORN), agricultural associations and groups, financial institutions and agencies, consumer groups

3. Responsible Governance

Priority: Develop an integrated food safety program

This priority focuses on the need to provide a quality evaluation service for industry in the areas of product standards, food safety, education, research, and analytical testing.

Activities include the following:

- Assist with the implementation of the Food Safety pillar of the APF Agreement, including the Regulatory Compliance Food and Farm Safety Program, aimed at enhancing industry compliance with standards and best practices.
- Revise and improve the Meat Inspection Program to meet growing public expectations for food and meat inspection.
- Implement an MOU on food safety signed with Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) in 2002, which will enhance the delivery of food inspection services in Nova Scotia.
- Implement an MOU with the Department of Environment and Labour for laboratory accreditation protocols for testing water, which includes focused scopes of testing under International Standards of Accreditation with the Standards Council of Canada and specializing laboratory services as a centre of excellence to support regulatory and industry demands.

Priority: Legislation, Information Management, and Red Tape Reduction

Under this priority, the department addresses the need for a regulatory climate that is conducive to business creation and development and, at the same time, ensures the right level of public safety and protection. An effective regulatory climate is critical to a healthy business climate and needs to reflect the principles of the Red Tape Reduction initiative.

Activities for fiscal 2003–04 include the following:

- Continue to implement recommendations of the Red Tape Reduction Regulatory Review report with a focus on regulations in fiscal 2003–04.
- Continue development of an approved standard for management of departmental records.
- Continue streamlining and transitioning of regulatory responsibilities included under the Dairy Industry Act, the Natural Product Act, and the Crop and Livestock Insurance Act.
- Complete review of Fisheries and Coastal Resources Act and regulations.

Priority: Licensing and issuing of permits

This functional area encompasses a suite of programs that include licensing of seafood processors and buyers, retail food outlets, restaurants, aquaculture, and rockweed harvesting and registration of agriculture farms. These programs are subject to continual improvements as the industries evolve.

The focus of activities for 2003–04 includes the following:

- Implement a revised fish processor and fish buyer licence policy including internal improvements to support the new policy.

Priority: Investigation and enforcement

Investigation and enforcement are key to ensuring an effective regulatory system and to maintaining orderly development of industry. In 2003–04, the department will continue to focus considerable attention on the fishery sector, in particular,

- Implement a new Fisheries Enforcement Strategy to address illegal fishing and buying and selling activities, which includes collaboration with federal and provincial agencies, increased staffing, and training.

Major Linkages

Federal: Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Canadian Food Inspection Agency, Canada Customs and Revenue Agency; Health Canada, RCMP

Provincial/municipal/inter-provincial: Departments of Environment and Labour, Natural Resources, and Health

Industry/NGOs: Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture, Atlantic Dairy Livestock Improvement Corporation (ADLIC), Society for the Prevention of Cruelty (SPC), Nova Scotia Food Safety, Quality Management Program (QMP) Umbrella

4. Lifelong Learning (Education, Training, Skill Development)

Priority: Increase NSAC research capacity

This priority recognizes the importance of the NSAC as the centre of agricultural education, research, and innovation for Atlantic Canada. This priority provides critical support to the department's economic growth agenda.

In fiscal 2003–04, the department will

- Establish new researcher positions in aquaculture nutrition, organic farming, and fruit by-product development.
- Implement the new Canada Research Chair in Agriculture Resource Management as part of the Canada Research Chairs Program.
- Implement the Technology/Research Training Initiative under the APF aimed at increasing the long-term innovative capacity of Nova Scotia's agri-food sector. This will be achieved through the NSAC by training highly qualified personnel at the graduate level.

Priority: Leaders in a globalized food system

Increase the capacity to become leaders in a globalized food system.

In fiscal 2003–04:

- NSAC will participate in an international exchange project with Jamaica, funded through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

Priority: Respond to emerging job opportunities

Seek opportunities to further diversify the NSAC curriculum to respond to new opportunities in life sciences, environmental engineering and biology, agricultural business, new and value-added product development, and aquaculture.

To meet this priority, the NSAC will

- Review, and revise where appropriate, academic and continuing education programs to ensure that educational programs meet the needs of students and prospective employers.

Priority: 4-H Leadership Development

Through the department's 4-H program, Nova Scotia youth are provided with opportunities to develop leadership and other lifelong learning skills.

Activities for 2003–04 include

- Promote 4-H as the organization of choice for rural youth through many avenues including a partnership with the Canadian 4-H Council and promotions and celebrations marking the 90th anniversary of 4-H in Canada..
- Participate in the next four phases of the national Ipsos-Reid Measures of Success.

Priority: Fishery professionalization

- Work with government partners and industry groups to improve professional and safety standards in commercial fish harvesting sector. This initiative will entail consultation with stakeholders and possible development of a formal agreement.

Major Linkages

Federal/international: national and international academic institutions, Canadian and international research institutes, international development agencies, ACOA, DFO

Provincial/municipal/interprovincial: Nova Scotia Department of Education, Agriculture and Fisheries

Industry/NGOs: Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture, Aquaculture Association of Nova Scotia, Atlantic universities and food institutes, InNOVAcorp, fish-harvesting organizations

Community Services

Mission

To promote the independence, self-reliance, security, and well-being of the people we serve.

Strategic Goals

Community Services' four strategic goals support government's priorities—for healthy; educated and confident; self-sufficient and prosperous Nova Scotians.

The department delivers a wide range of programs and services that invest in vulnerable Nova Scotians—children, individuals, and families. These programs and services ensure that these Nova Scotians have the opportunity to both participate in and contribute to the social and economic well-being of the province and have access to safe, appropriate, and affordable housing. For example, Community Services provides supports and protection for children and their families when they are in need. In doing so, we are promoting their lifelong well-being and ensuring that our economy will continue to grow and that the social fabric of the province will be strengthened.

Through housing programs we recognize that safe, appropriate, and affordable housing is a significant contributor to the health of our communities and to the personal well-being of all Nova Scotians. Good housing provides the environment and base needed to effectively deliver other social programs, such as home care and education, while creating employment in the residential construction industry across the province.

In the process of delivering our programs and services, we are focused on process improvements that will put Community Services on a fiscally sustainable foundation. This recognizes the need to update existing technology and to continuously improve the way we deliver services.

Our four strategic goals are as follows:

- Individuals and families are self-sufficient and are able to support themselves.
- Children, youth, and persons with disabilities are protected and supported within families and communities that promote their healthy development.
- Nova Scotians are assisted in obtaining safe, affordable, appropriate, and sustainable housing.
- Services are provided in an efficient and accountable manner through effective service delivery.

Core Business Areas

The department's key businesses are delivering employment support and income assistance, family and children's services, housing services, and community supports for adults.

1. Employment Support and Income Assistance

The thrust of Nova Scotia's Employment Support and Income Assistance Program is to help people maximize their own level of self-sufficiency. The services offered by the department include the following:

- needs-tested financial assistance to cover basic necessities to individuals and families
- expenses related to special needs for employability and training, such as dental services and eyeglasses
- a range of employment support services available to all income assistance recipients, who are deemed appropriate for participation in employability activity
- prescription drug coverage for income assistance recipients
- financial assistance programs to help seniors maintain their independence in their own homes for as long as possible, including Special Social Assistance, Property Tax Rebate, and Rental Assistance Programs, which are administered based on specific eligibility criteria.

To complement the province's Employment Support and Income Assistance Program, we provide through the Nova Scotia Child Benefit Program, child benefits to Nova Scotian families that have annual incomes of less than $20,921 and eligible children under the age of 18.

2. Family and Children's Services

The future of Nova Scotia is based on providing safe and nurturing environments in which children can develop to their full potential. To meet this goal, Community Services provides a full range of support services to children, youth, and their families. These services provide community-based, prevention-oriented supports for both children and families. Services provided include the following:

- child protection services that assess all reports of alleged child abuse and neglect and deliver a range of interventions, counselling, and placement services for children and youth in need of protection
- programs that support the family unit and foster healthy child development, including: child-care subsidies at licensed full-day child-care centres, financial support to non-profit child-care centres to enable preschool children of low-income families to participate in a "head start" or enriched part-day child-care program, and funding to assist full and part-day child-care centres in their inclusion of children with identified special needs
- early intervention services that help young children (0–6 years) with identified special needs reach their potential by working directly with the children and families in their homes
- support services for a variety of community outreach services, including: transition houses for abused women and their children, women's centres intervention programs for abusive men, and coordination of community development initiatives focused on prevention of child abuse and the improvement of outcomes for children
- programs such as in-home support and respite care for families that care for their children with physical and developmental disabilities at home.

The department also regulates the provision of services by licensing, establishing standards and policies, and evaluating and monitoring compliance. We license, for example, 378 child-care centres, 31 residential child-caring facilities, and 17 small option homes. We also complete yearly re-evaluations for 661 foster homes.

3. Housing Services

Housing is a basic need and fundamental to personal well-being. Housing provides the base upon which to build healthy and sustainable communities. To foster healthy communities, Housing Services uses its existing buildings and technical and financial resources to support communities. We do this by providing safe affordable housing to people all over the province. The variety of housing services offered by the department includes

- provincial and federal/provincial housing grant programs for low- to moderate-income Nova Scotians to assist them in undertaking major repairs to their homes

- services in support of the province's 12,500 public housing units, which provide housing for approximately 18,500 Nova Scotians
- administration of third-party agreements for approximately 9,000 co-operative and other non-profit housing units
- administration of the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's Nova Scotia loan portfolio of approximately $180 million and of $37 million in provincially funded loans to homeowners and non-profit organizations;
- development of moderately priced serviced building lots
- development of new, affordable homeowner and rental housing under the Affordable Housing Program.

In addition, we provide space in our existing public housing buildings for community groups to provide services to support our tenants and their communities, including parent and family resource centres, day-care centres, and breakfast programs for children.

4. Community Supports for Adults

Some adult Nova Scotians need support services to participate to their full potential in the community. To meet this challenge the department provides services that include:

- a range of community and institution-based support services for adults who are mentally disabled
- assessment and classification services to ensure that individuals requiring care and/or supervision are appropriately placed
- licensing, inspection, and monitoring services to ensure that standards are met in all community living settings that provide care and supervision for mentally challenged adults.

Priorities for 2003–2004

1. Employment Support and Income Assistance

In August 1, 2001, the department introduced a new Employment Support and Income Assistance Program. This program focuses on helping people become self-sufficient, and it is consistent with the government's desire to build "the foundation for a growing economy that includes all citizens and regions of the province." In 2002–03, a program evaluation framework was developed with a goal of implementing the evaluation in 2003–04.

The department's priority in this area for 2003–04 is:

- Develop and implement a work plan for the ongoing evaluation of the Employment Support and Income Assistance Program using the evaluation framework developed in 2002–03. (DCS Priority #1)

2. Family and Children's Services

We continue to strengthen services to families and children. We recognize that children are our future. To lay a strong foundation for our children, the department has introduced a variety of new programs and services that focus on enhancing early childhood development in the province. These initiatives are part of the five-year federal/provincial/territorial Early Childhood Development Initiative. The implementation of this initiative is critical to the province's commitment to ensuring the best possible future for young Nova Scotians.

The department's priorities for 2003–04 are as follows:

- Implement a secure care program. (DCS Priority #2)

  Secure care is a temporary step that involves stabilizing children with severe behavioural and emotional problems so that they can eventually return to their families and communities. Previously, secure care services were not available within Nova Scotia, and children and youth were referred to other provinces, separating them from essential family supports and increasing the financial costs of the service. In 2002, construction began on a $4-million secure care facility in Truro. Due to construction issues, the facility will not be completed until 2003–04. Once the facility is ready, we can begin to deliver the program in Nova Scotia, which will allow for enriched treatment and better use of our resources.

- Redesign Adoption Services so that children in permanent care are placed more readily with adoptive parents. (DCS Priority #3)

Adoption provides stable and family-centred placements for the majority of adoptees. Therefore, increasing the number of adoptions of children in the permanent care and custody of the Minister of Community Services will benefit the children, while at the same time reduce overall expenditures on children in care. In 2002, approximately 709 children under 15 years of age were in permanent care and custody, of whom 366 children were under 10 years of age.

- Continue to implement key early childhood development initiatives:

- Stabilize and enhance child care. This includes increasing the training levels of child-care professionals, increasing the number of child-care centres in the province, and increasing the number of subsidized child-care spaces for lower-income families to access child care. Together these initiatives will make quality child care more accessible to parents across the province.

- Enhance the home-visiting program, Healthy Beginnings. This enhanced program will ensure that all mothers with newborn children are contacted by a public health nurse. Those children in families who need and would benefit from additional contact, will receive home visiting as required, up until the child is three years of age. In implementing this program in 2003–04, the district health authorities will be hiring additional public health nurses and training and hiring lay persons to work with the nurses in communities throughout the province.

- Provide parenting education and support. This initiative includes such activities as enhancing parent education opportunities in the province and enhancing children's language and cognitive development by offering an early language and learning program.

- Implement required infrastructure to create at the local level a system of early childhood development services. Regional Collaboration Teams have been set up to develop these systems and to enhance the collaboration of services across the province. (DCS Priority# 4)

3. Housing Services

The signing of the Canada–Nova Scotia Affordable Housing Agreement—a five-year agreement involving approximately $37.26 million—will play an important role in addressing the housing needs of individuals, families, and seniors. The agreement signifies the return of federal government funding for affordable housing in Nova Scotia. We began constructing new affordable housing under this agreement in 2002–03. These are the first new projects built in Nova Scotia in 10 years.

The department's priorities for 2003–04 are as follows:

- Implement the new Affordable Housing Programs to provide affordable housing for low- to moderate-income Nova Scotians. The Affordable Housing Program is a five-year program with four components: New Rental Housing Initiative, New Home Ownership Program, Rental Rehabilitation Program, and Homeowner Rehabilitation Program. (DCS Priority #5)
- Review the results and improve programs based on our Home Repair Program Evaluation completed in 2002–03. (DCS Priority #6)
- Complete an evaluation framework for evaluating all the programs under the 1997 Social Housing Agreement (The agreement, itself, requires that we evaluate the programs.) (DCS Priority #7)
- Implement the 2003–04 research priorities under the Housing Research Framework, namely, carry out a provincial housing needs assessment, review the definition of affordability, and continue to conduct housing-related research into healthy communities. (DCS Priority #8)

4. Community Supports for Adults

In 2002–03 the department embarked on an initiative to redesign the continuum of services for Nova Scotians with disabilities. This initiative will involve a comprehensive review of all aspects of the Community Supports for Adults Program. This includes examining the mandate, access, assessment, client supports, licensing, information technology, resources, and legislation. During the review, Nova Scotians will be asked to provide their thoughts on services for adults with disabilities. The objective is to work with community groups and Nova Scotians to develop an accessible, responsive, and sustainable program.

The department's priority in this area for 2003–04 is:

- Develop a model for services for Nova Scotians with disabilities, which will include a revised mandate, standards, and recommended legislative changes. (DCS Priority #9)

Education

Mission

To provide excellence in education and training for personal fulfilment and for a productive, prosperous society.

The department's goals, guiding principles, and strategies help to develop an environment where education and training are valued, achievement is celebrated, and learners are provided with opportunities and tools for rewarding and successful learning experiences.

Belief statements that underpin this mission statement reflect the department's commitment to access to lifelong learning opportunities, full participation at all levels of the education and training system for all Nova Scotians, and accountability of all partners.

Goals

The Government of Nova Scotia has adopted three main priorities for public policy initiatives that must be addressed within the context of fiscal sustainability and a balanced budget. These priorities provide a framework for departmental activities and are as follows:

- Health Care: stabilize funding and improve service availability and quality
- Education: improve the quality of education and the learning environment
- Economy, Jobs, and Growth: take advantage of economic opportunities to maximize jobs and growth.

The Department of Education's goals for 2003–04 are focused on fulfilling the government priorities and fall within the following seven main goals:

- to improve conditions for learning in the public education system
- to strengthen educational programming and services in priority areas
- to enable the provision of relevant and high-quality post-secondary education and training
- to promote healthy, active learning communities and families
- to foster access, equity, and diversity through and within education and training
- to develop a skilled and adaptable workforce
- to strengthen accountability in the areas of governance, resource investment and utilization, and reporting of results.

Core Business Areas

The mandate of the Department of Education spans the public school system, community colleges, universities, private career colleges, a comprehensive system of adult learning, apprenticeship, public libraries, and other programs and services to support lifelong learning. The core business functions of the department can be defined under five key business areas: primary–12 education, higher education, skills and learning, corporate policy and corporate administrative services. As set out in the guidelines from Treasury and Policy Board, the core business areas do not include the internal support functions of finance, information technology and human resource management.

1. Primary–12 Education

The primary–12 education core business area encompasses the Public Schools and Acadian and French Language Services Branches. These branches coordinate the design, development, implementation, and evaluation of programs, courses, services, and related policies and resources for the public school system and correspondence studies. These include English and French first-language and second-language programs; provincial, national, and international assessments of student achievement; special education; comprehensive guidance and counselling; multicultural education; support services for the educational achievement of Mi'kmaq and African Nova Scotians; the evaluation and provision of print and technological learning resources; professional development for administrators and teachers; and the provision of advice to school boards in educational and operational matters.

The core functions of the primary–12 education business area are as follows:

- identifies priorities, coordinates the development, and evaluates implementation of public school programs, policies, educational services, and related priorities
- provides direction and advice to school boards on all matters pertaining to public education
- coordinates the development and implementation of specialized educational programming and services to support Acadian, African Nova Scotian, and Mi'kmaq students and students enrolled in French and English second-language programs
- coordinates the development and implementation of services for students with special needs and other student support services

- evaluates resources to be included in *Authorized Learning Resources* and provides technology services to support the curriculum
- coordinates school improvement planning and accreditation programs
- coordinates provincial, national, and international assessments and publishes an annual *Minister's Report to Parents* on the results
- plans and conducts in-service teacher education and summer institutes and assists school boards in developing and providing professional development programs
- negotiates and administers federal assistance programs provided under the Official Languages in Education Program (OLEP) for French First- and Second-Language Programs
- provides consultative and advisory services to other education partners, such as universities, colleges, other departments and agencies, professional associations and organizations, advocacy groups, the media, and the general public, regarding public school policies, programs, and educational services and engages in interdepartmental initiatives.

2. Higher Education

The higher education core business area encompasses the Higher Education Branch. This branch contributes to the Department of Education's lifelong learning mandate by providing funding and services to post-secondary institutions and libraries to maintain and enhance accessibility to post-secondary education, promote formal and informal learning opportunities, and support teacher training, professional development, and certification.

Further, the Higher Education Branch monitors the provision of sufficient numbers of highly qualified personnel, in partnership with the post-secondary education institutions, to meet the emergent labour market demand and the need for a knowledgeable, engaged citizenry.

The core functions of the higher education business area are as follows:

- advises the Minister on all matters relating to universities, the Nova Scotia Community College, and Université Sainte-Anne/Collège de l'Acadie
- provides funding and supports universities, community colleges and regional public libraries

- leads or participates in federal-provincial and interprovincial negotiations related to post-secondary education
- advises the Minister on matters relating to training at private career colleges and develops related policy
- provides a range of accessibility-related programs, goods, and services to adult Nova Scotians with disabilities in post-secondary training and employment
- provides teacher certification and classification functions and recognizes and maintains teaching service records
- assists the post-secondary education institutions to meet emergent needs of the labour market
- develops student loan policy, manages the loan portfolio and administers the Canada and Nova Scotia student loan programs
- coordinates regional public library services and promotes library co-operation at national, regional, and provincial levels.

3. Skills and Learning

The skills and learning core business area encompasses the Skills and Learning Branch. This branch designs and implements policies, programs, and services that support the development of a world-class workforce and a culture of lifelong learning. The branch is the coordinating lead for the Skills Nova Scotia Framework, Action Plan, and Report on Skills. Programs and services carried out through the branch include apprenticeship training, adult education opportunities in the community and the workplace, targeted skills initiatives, and initiatives targeted at youth.

The core functions of the core business area, skills and learning, are as follows:

- coordinates and supports the implementation of the province's *Skills Nova Scotia Framework*, Action Plan and Report on Skills
- coordinates federal-provincial relations related to the labour market development
- advises the Minister on all matters related to skill development
- creates labour market policy and undertakes labour market research, including the collection, analysis, and dissemination of labour market information
- oversees the Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning and administers the General Education Development (GED) testing service and the Nova Scotia High School Graduation Diploma for Adults

- coordinates educational programs and services in the areas of community-based literacy, family literacy, and workplace essential skill development
- supports workforce adjustment and attachment initiatives
- sets and monitors the standards for adult education, apprenticeship training, and essential skills programming
- administers the Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Training Program and the Provincial Apprenticeship Board
- offers programming and support for English as a second language (ESL) for adults to promote immigrant attachment to the labour market
- works across departments to advise government on the issues affecting the lives of young Nova Scotians in their transition to adulthood and provides information services to youth and youth-serving organizations.

4. Corporate Policy

The corporate policy core business area encompasses the Corporate Policy Branch. This branch is responsible for providing policy, planning, research, coordination, and information support services to all areas of the department. This responsibility is performed by compiling and developing, through research and analysis, such information as needed by the department to address emerging issues and proposed policy or program changes.

The core functions of the corporate policy business area are as follows:

- coordinates the development, communication, and evaluation of policy for all departmental jurisdictions
- undertakes strategic and business planning for the department
- supports a strategic focus on corporate departmental issues (e.g., legislative and policy matters)
- undertakes focused research to address current and emerging issues across all sections of the department
- develops and maintains a comprehensive management information system and statistical service relating to public education matters
- coordinates interprovincial and intergovernmental relations in matters relating to the responsibilities of the department

- coordinates provincial immigration matters and federal-provincial activity related to immigration
- provides access to information and supports the implementation of records management for the department
- manages departmental information resources and library services and print and electronic publishing initiatives

5. Corporate Administrative Services

The corporate administrative services core business area encompasses the Corporate Services and the Human Resources and Legal Services Branches, which provide a range of services to school boards, community colleges, public libraries, and other related organizations to assist the department in meeting its mandate. These services are in the key areas of financial management and control, facilities and transportation management, distribution of learning resources and related products, information technology management and support, human resources management and planning, and legal services.

The core functions of the corporate administrative services business area are as follows:

- provides comptrollership functions and administers provincial grants to school boards, community colleges, universities, community-based learning organizations, and public libraries
- undertakes grant-recipient audits, facilities planning, and equipment acquisition
- establishes accountability and financial guidelines for school boards and monitors school board financial performance
- manages the province's school capital program, including the construction of new schools, major alterations and additions to existing schools; and the province's school indoor-air-quality program
- monitors school boards' student transportation systems
- operates the school book bureau
- provides coordinated wide area network (EDnet) communications and services to schools, school boards, community colleges and libraries for administrative systems and access to the Internet by students, teachers, and the public
- promotes and supports the use of information technology throughout the education and training system

- provides human resources and legal services to school boards on matters of provincial scope to build expertise and consistency across the public school system in dealing with common issues (collective bargaining, grievance handling, human resource planning, administration, and accountability structures).

Priorities

To meet the business-planning guidelines, the department's priorities are organized according to the lead core business area of the department with the supporting or partnering core business areas noted in brackets at the end of each priority. To assist the reader, the priorities under the primary–12 education system have been sub-categorized by departmental goal.

1. Primary–12 Education

P–12 Priorities Related to the Goal of Improving the Conditions for Learning

- With the goal to improve conditions for learning, the department has developed a Program of Learning Assessment for Nova Scotia (PLANS). PLANS will continue to provide reliable information on student achievement in specific curriculum areas. Assessments scheduled to be administered are the Programme of International Student Assessment (PISA) (15-year-old students); Elementary Mathematics Program Assessment (grade 5 students in English programs and French immersion programs) and Elementary Literacy Assessment (grade 6 students); and Nova Scotia Examinations in English 12, English/Communications 12, Mathematics 12/Mathématiques 12, Advanced Mathematics 12/ Mathématiques avancée12, Calcul différential et intégral 12, Chemistry 12 (English and French immersion), and Physics 12. As well, other assessments will be developed for administration, namely, the School Achievement Indicators Program (SAIP) in Science (13- and 16-year-old students), and a Junior High Mathematics Program Assessment (grade 8).

- A French Language Skills Assessment for grade 9 French immersion students will be developed for administration in 2004–05.
- The department will work with school boards on implementation of the Time to Learn Strategy. The department will monitor and collect data on the implementation of guidelines for instructional time, of which guidelines for grades primary–6 were introduced in September 2002. These guidelines include minimum requirements for mathematics, core French, and language arts. The department will introduce new guidelines for instructional time, grades 7–9, including minimum time requirements for mathematics, core French, and language arts. The department will pilot new models for the delivery of core French in the elementary and junior high programs, including innovative ways to use instructional time.
- The Information Economy Initiative (IEI) supports teaching and learning through the use of technology, with the current focus on grades 4-6. This initiative includes the provision of computers, software, professional development, and technical support. It is expected that more than 900 computers and software will be added to grades 4–6 in 2003–04. Funding will also be allocated to school boards to provide professional development and technical support. (In conjunction with Corporate Administrative Services)
- The department will continue to coordinate SchoolNet Grassroots initiatives for the development of on-line learning activities for students and to refurbish computers for schools through the federal-provincial Computers for Schools initiative (Technology Recycling Program). For Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (CSAP) schools, these last two initiatives are coordinated at the school-board level. (In conjunction with Corporate Administrative Services)

- The department will continue with implementation of the Code of Conduct, which covers all school members. Implementation will include professional development and the development of Code of Conduct Guidelines, including discipline tracking and reporting, a policy on formal reference checks for all staff and volunteers, and a complaints resolution process. Implementation of this initiative will continue with the introduction of a handbook on positive behavioural implementation strategies developed through the Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation (APEF) and four research pilots across the province.

- Four pilots identified to work with the department on meeting the needs of diverse learners in high schools will be undertaken. *Increasing Learning Success* will be used to guide this process. The department will continue the school accreditation pilot introduced in September 2002. School improvement plans and the process involved in their development by the eight schools involved in the pilot will be reviewed by external teams. These pilot schools will implement approved improvement plans in the 2003–04 school year. After demonstrating progress in meeting identified goals and targets for school improvement, the schools will be accredited.

- Literacy continues to be a priority. The department will continue the development of "Let's Talk about ..." pamphlets to inform parents about the instructional program and ways they can support students' literacy development. The department will continue to work collaboratively with university partners on initiatives designed to strengthen pre-service and in-service teacher education in literacy.

- Funding will be targeted for the enhancement of resource teachers, student services professionals, and Reading Recovery™ ratios with school boards. School boards will be encouraged to submit proposals to bridge the gaps that exist between the number of core professional service providers; such as resource teachers, school psychologists, and speech-language pathologists, currently employed by school boards and the recommended professional service ratios. Additional funding will provide, over a three-year period, 135 additional professional staff positions. It is the goal of the Department of Education to achieve full implementation of Reading Recovery™ by having the program available to all grade 1 students who require it. Normalization of the *Observation Survey* with French immersion students and related professional development will be undertaken in order to provide French immersion students access to the Reading Recovery™ program.

- The Writers in Action initiative, introduced in grade 4 in 2002–03, will be expanded to grade 5. This initiative is designed to increase emphasis on grammar, usage, spelling, and punctuation and to ensure that students have access to structured, sequential language instruction. Writers in Action includes the provision of a student handbook for all grade 4 students, additional learning resources for classroom writing centres, teaching materials, and professional development programs.
- Spelling will be a particular focus in 2003–04. The department will implement *Spelling: A Teaching Resource* for teachers in grades primary–8 and provide additional learning and professional resources to support this component of the instructional program.
- A literacy strategy will be developed for Acadian students beginning at the grade 4 level and extending to grade 7. This initiative, Écrivains à l'oeuvre, has been broadened to include grammar, punctuation, and spelling strategies. The department will identify appropriate resource materials for teachers and students and will provide professional development through a summer institute.
- The department's Active Young Readers/Jeunes lecteurs actifs initiative will continue to provide support for the literacy development of students in grades primary–6. The department will implement the *Active Young Readers Grades 4–6 Reading Assessment Resource* to assist classroom teachers in assessing students' reading development, strengths, and learning needs. Professional development of teacher leaders in grades 4–6 will be continue, with a focus on the use of information and communication technologies to support literacy development.

- The department will continue to support the Jeunes lecteurs actifs and Écrivains à l'oeuvre initiatives for French immersion students in grades 4–6 and Jeunes lecteurs actifs and Écrivains à l'oeuvre initiatives for grades 4–6 in all Acadian schools by providing learning resources for students, leadership training and support documents for school board teams and teaching staff, and summer institutes and other professional development activities.
- The junior high literacy initiative, Active Readers/Lecteurs actifs, will expand to provide increased support for grade 8 students in English and French immersion programs and continue to be offered for grades 7–9 in all Acadian schools. The focus at this level will be on high-quality literacy instruction across the curriculum for all learners and effective interventions for students who are having literacy difficulties. It will include learning resources for students, leadership training and support documents for school board teams, and summer institutes and other professional development activities for Anglophone and Francophone teachers.
- The department will continue to work within the APEF on projects for French second-language projects and Acadian schools. Activities will include the development of a literacy assessment resource for grade 4–6 French immersion students, support documents for French second-language teachers, and resources to support grades 2–8 French curriculum and the French language arts program offered in grades 9–12 in Acadian schools, as well as the analysis of a regional survey administered to grade 11 students no longer taking core French.
- The department will administer the Elementary Literacy Assessment in October 2003 to determine the reading and writing skills of grade 6 Anglophone and Francophone students. Parents will receive a report on their child's achievement. Students who do not meet an acceptable level of achievement will be given support.
- LiteracyLinks resources will be developed to assist content area teachers in English and French immersion programs in strengthening students' literacy development.

- The department is working with the other Atlantic provinces through APEF to improve student achievement in the PISA. Nova Scotia is the lead province in developing a mathematics sampler that will be distributed to teachers in the region to help them to prepare their students for the next PISA administration in the spring of 2003. An information pamphlet for the public will be published. As well, a provincial profile of Nova Scotia results will be produced as part of a research project. Over 40 countries participate in this international assessment.

- The department will distribute guidelines for ESL. A guide for classroom and ESL teachers, which is in development, focuses on practical and effective teaching practices. The department has developed a language-proficiency diagnostic assessment tool to support program planning for ESL students.

- The department will be negotiating with Canadian Heritage for supplementary funding under OLEP. The department has several initiatives to propose, including the development of a comprehensive consultation of Acadian stakeholders related to senior high curriculum, a pilot project of arts in Acadian schools, an instrument to assess the language skills of grade 9 French immersion students, and pilot projects for the elementary French course and core French distance courses. A submission for funding has been made.

- The department will conduct Positive Parenting Workshops for parents of African Canadian students. These workshops will be designed to increase parents' knowledge of the school system and related policies, procedures, rights, and responsibilities; to improve parenting skills that support children in achieving school success; and to teach ways to access resources beyond the school and to recognize and address the changing needs of their children.

- The department will begin implementation of the multi-year plan developed in response to the Report of the Special Education Implementation Review Committee (SEIRC). The plan addresses initiatives and activities from 2002–03 to 2005–06. In responding to the government's promise to introduce a multi-year plan to increase support for students with special needs, additional funding has been identified in *Learning for Life: Planning for Student Success* from 2003–06.
- In 2003–04, a communication plan to improve the understanding of inclusive schooling and programming for students with special needs will be developed in consultation with the student services coordinators of school boards. One component of the plan will be the development of a series of information brochures addressing: inclusion, the appeal process, identification and assessment, and transition planning. A template will be developed for writing appeal decisions, and a guide for parents on program planning will be developed.
- The Provincial Transition Committee involving the departments of Community Services and Education, and school board representatives is being re-established under the auspices of the Children and Youth Action Committee (CAYAC) to address transition issues for students with special needs.
- The *Transition Planning Handbook* has been revised, with an emphasis on transitions at all stages rather than just transition to work and community. The handbook will be implemented in the 2003–04 school year.
- A video on school-wide enrichment as a professional development support for teachers and administrators and for information sessions for parents has been completed. Implementation will begin in Spring 2003.

- Support for professional development activities will continue in the provision of summer institute opportunities for teachers. A summer institute(s) for school board office/school administrators/student services personnel in mediation skills training will be held this summer. A summer institute for new and aspiring school administrators will be held on administrative practices that enhance meeting the needs of diverse learners.
- The department will enhance learning and professional resources by implementing a guide on resource teaching and by reviewing the *Authorized Learning Resources* list with working groups from school boards and the department in order to identify resources for annotation that meet diverse student needs. Funding will be targeted for direct provision of additional learning resources.
- Pilot projects will enable school boards to enhance the continuum of services available to students with special needs. Boards will be invited to apply for designated funding through submission of project proposals. Through an evaluation process, the department will identify and report on successful practices.

P–12 Priorities Related to the Goal of Strengthening Educational Programming and Services in Priority Areas

- At the senior high level, the department will introduce 220-hour course options for grade 10 mathematics (English programs) and will pilot a 220-hour course option for English language arts. The department will continue to work with boards toward consistency in semestering practices for 2004–05. To allow more students to continue core French at the high school level, the department will develop and pilot a grade 12 core French course offered via distance education.
- The implementation of the Youth Pathways and Transitions strategy will continue in 2003–04. The department will work with school boards and industry partners to conduct nine Nova Scotia Youth Apprenticeship Program pilots. The department will implement three new courses: Business Management 12, Food Science 12, and Agriculture/Agrifood 11. The department will continue development and piloting of interactive technology course options linked to labour market opportunities, including Multimedia 12, Geomatics 12, and Computer Studies 12.

- The department will expand career-related course offerings with the development of a new family studies course, Community Care 12, and the development of Tourism 12 to build upon the highly successful course Tourism 11. These courses will be developed to articulate with post-secondary studies—Community Care 12 with the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) health and human services programs and Tourism 12 with Mount Saint Vincent University's Tourism Studies and the NSCC Tourism and Hospitality program.
- The department will continue to develop, support, and promote articulation agreements with the NSCC for Cultural Industries 11, Multimedia 12, Geomatics 12, Business Management 12, Entrepreneurship 12, Agriculture/Agrifood 11, Film and Video Production 12, Electrotechnologies 11, and Design 11.
- The department will begin development of a series of publications to illustrate pathways from grade 7 through high school and post-secondary education and training to employment in a range of occupations. These publications will include a handbook for guidance counsellors and career practitioners, a series of brochures for students and parents, and a series of posters for classrooms. The department will also develop student and teacher resources to connect secondary curricula to career options.
- As part of the implementation of new health/personal development and relationships course for grade 7, the department will introduce the Nova Scotia Student Career Portfolio to 12,000 students.
- At the senior high level, the department will develop an English 10 Plus course to address the needs of students requiring additional support in literacy development. In addition, the department will work with school boards to pilot other initiatives that provide increased time and support for literacy. Two teaching resources, *English 10: A Teaching Resource* and *Writers in Action 10*, will be developed for implementation in 2004–05.

- Implementation of Français pré-emploi at all senior high levels will also benefit Acadian students who are struggling with some areas of language arts.

- Mathematics continues to be a priority area. The department will continue to support school boards and their schools in implementing Mathematics Strategy initiatives. Professional development for school-based math leaders, grades primary–9, will continue, and workshops will be provided for principals, as well, to assist them in leading implementation of the mathematics program at the site level. Ten grade-level teaching guides, *Mathematics: A Teaching Resource*, will be completed and implemented.

- The department will develop two CurriculumLinks resources for teachers in English and French immersion programs: *MathLinks Grades Primary–2* and *MathLinks Grades 3–5*. These will assist teachers in connecting mathematics learning to other program areas; classroom resources will be provided to support literacy-numeracy links in grades primary–2.

- The department will begin the process of implementing new learning resources for elementary mathematics. A number of resources will be developed and provided to strengthen links between the math class and home. These will include four pamphlets for parents, "homework baggies" for grades primary–3, and other communication tools to assist teachers in working with parents to support student learning in mathematics.

- The department will continue the adaptation and translation of the Atlantic Canada mathematics curriculum documents for grades P–3 and grades 9 and 10 for teachers in French immersion programs. Related professional development activities will be undertaken.

- The department will continue to evaluate the elementary and junior high mathematics programs and provide student achievement information for the purpose of improving program implementation. Junior high mathematics teachers will receive a comprehensive report of what was learned from the junior high mathematics program assessment. The report, *Toward a Coherent Mathematics Program: Junior High*, will be a companion to the elementary mathematics program assessment report, *Toward a Coherent Mathematics Program: Elementary*, distributed last year to elementary mathematics teachers. The junior high report will provide suggestions for teachers to assist their students in learning mathematics.

- At the senior high level, the department will support English school boards in implementing Mathematics 10 Plus and Mathematics Foundations 10 Plus. The department will develop supplementary teaching resources for Mathematics 10 and Mathematics Foundations 10 courses. In addition, the department will work with boards to pilot other initiatives that provide increased time and support for mathematics learning, including the development of a Mathematics Essentials 10 course.

- Acadian schools will benefit from a new curriculum for all mathématiques courses and the introduction of Mathématiques pré-emploi at all senior high levels. Mathématiques pré-calcul 12 will also be introduced in September 2003.

- The department will continue the development of a data bank (hard copy and on line) of mathematics questions to assist teachers of grades 11 and 12 in designing tests, quizzes, and assignments. (In conjunction with Corporate Administrative Services)

- The department will implement Nova Scotia Examinations in mathematics for Anglophone, Francophone, and French immersion students. The examinations will count for 30 per cent of students' final course marks. The department will publish a *Mathematics Item Writer's Guide* to involve teachers in the examination process, allowing them to contribute to the computerized bank of mathematics questions. All grade 12 mathematics teachers will participate in a full-day examination in-service, and each will receive a *Nova Scotia Examinations Mathematics 12/ Advanced Mathematics 12 Teacher Information Guide* outlining the examinations and giving sample questions.

- The department will continue to support the implementation of the Atlantic Canada science curriculum for grades primary and 1 in English and French immersion programs. New curriculum and resources will be introduced for grade 2 science. The department will assist school boards through the provision of a leadership workshop, a summer institute, teaching resources, and the tools young learners need for hands-on, minds-on science experiences. The department will implement *ScienceLinks Primary–2: A Teaching Resource* to assist teachers in connecting science learning to literacy, mathematics, and other program areas.
- LiteracyLinks: Science 7 will be developed to support implementation of Active Readers 7 and assist teachers in strengthening the writing component of the grade 7 science curriculum. A professional development workshop will be conducted for teacher leaders of science, grades 9 and 10. To strengthen implementation of the Atlantic Canada physics curriculum, new textbooks and CD teacher resources will be provided for grade 11 physics. *Physics 11 and Physics 12: A Teaching Resource* will be implemented. In addition, the department will work with university partners to develop a curriculum document for Advanced Physics 11 and Advanced Physics 12 to set standards for curriculum delivery and student learning in advanced-level courses.
- The department will implement African Heritage Literature 12, a new elective course, which will include the provision of professional development and learning resources.
- The department will continue to support the implementation of African Canadian History 11, Gaelic Studies 11, and Mi'kmaq Studies 10. The department will implement Mi'kmaw Language 7 and will continue to develop curriculum and resources for Mi'kmaw language courses at the junior high level.
- The department will develop new courses for correspondence study: Math 9, Art 10, Science 10, Mi'kmaq Studies 11, Math Foundations 11, Biology 11, Communications Technology 11, Chemistry 11 and 12, and Child Studies 11.

P–12 Priorities Related to the Goal of Promoting Healthy, Active Learning Communities and Families

- The department's Active Healthy Schools strategy will include assistance to school boards in the implementation of Health Education: Grades 4-6 and Health/Personal Development and Relationships: Grade 7. This assistance will include the provision of addictions (smoking, substance abuse) prevention and anti-bullying resources. The department will continue to work with partners to support Active School Communities pilots in each school board.
- The department will continue the development of new high school physical education courses.

P–12 Priorities Related to the Goal of Fostering Access, Equity, and Diversity

- The department will assist school boards in increasing the provision of student support workers' services for African Nova Scotian students and other students who require support and will develop operational guidelines for student support workers. The department will continue to provide professional development and related resources to assist school boards in enhancing race relations, cross-cultural communication, and human rights education.
- The Racial Equity Policy will begin to be implemented in 2003–04. This policy outlines the department's commitment to promoting equity in our public school system. The policy supports the work done by school boards to develop their own racial equity policies and provides an overall provincial framework to ensure consistency.
- The department will continue to work toward the establishment of an Africentric Learning Institute.
- The department will continue to work toward the implementation of key recommendations of the *BLAC Report on Education*.

P–12 Priorities Related to the Goal of Strengthening Accountability

- The department is committed to providing parents with regular, clear information on their children's progress. The department will continue to pilot the new standard report cards and will conduct a consultation in April 2003 with pilot schools, parents, and other partners to evaluate the new report cards and reporting system. The department will work with boards on the use of technology in producing report cards. The process of implementing new report cards and reporting policy will begin in 2003–04.

- The department will develop a new interactive Web site for parents, which will include plain-language information on what students are learning and how students are doing in our schools.

- The department will work to enhance monitoring and reporting on student progress and achievement by working with school boards to identify appropriate monitoring and review mechanisms regarding Individual Program Plans (IPPs). A section for reporting on the outcomes of IPPs in the new Provincial Report Card will be implemented.

- The department will develop and implement a framework for the decision-making process regarding the acquisition, distribution, and provision of a range of assistive technology devices and services for grades primary–12.

- The department will develop a discussion paper concerning the role and responsibilities of School Advisory Councils (SAC) and ways to make these more meaningful. Professional development for SACs will be included as an area for discussion. This paper will be circulated to SACs and school boards.

2. Higher Education

- The Nova Scotia Advisory Board on Colleges and Universities (NSABCU) will consider issues including: quality assurance, accountability, and the role and capacity of the post-secondary education institutions. The Advisory Board will also consult with post-secondary institutions on issues such as the need to define institutional and system-wide mission statements, greater articulation between the community college and university systems, and institutional and system planning to respond to the need for health-care professionals.

- The first five-year review (1996–2001) of the Nova Scotia Community College, as mandated by the Community Colleges Act, has resulted in the identification of specific measures of accountability that will be used for the next five-year review (2006). The NSABCU further expects that these same measures may be applied to future reviews of other post-secondary institutions.
- The merger of Université Sainte-Anne and Collège de l'Acadie, and their five-year business plan, will form the basis of this department's provision of high-quality, accessible post-secondary education in French.
- The department will implement a new student debt-reduction program and consult on a new policy for designating educational institutions, to ensure the sustainability of government-sponsored student loans for future post-secondary students.
- The department will re-engineer the student assistance production system, which will enable increased reporting, better use of resources through automation, and the development of an extensive audit process. (In conjunction with Corporate Administrative Services)
- In 2003–04 the department will continue to monitor the General Regulations made pursuant to the Private Career Colleges Regulation Act to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of the private career college sector and that consumer protection remains a priority.
- The department will continue to work with the NSCC on their Development Initiative, which would expand enrolments at NSCC. This initiative outlines infrastructure improvements to rural campuses, enabling an increase in 1,500 seats, and the replacement of a Metro campus, which would increase capacity by 1,000 seats.
- The department will provide additional funding assistance to universities in 2002–03 with the expectation that tuition-fee increases will be mitigated for 2003–04.
- Research and innovation will be actively enhanced in universities and the NSCC by continuing to provide matching funding for national research grants.

- The department will continue to review teacher certification requirements and standards, both within the Atlantic provinces and across Canada, with a view to achieving increased mobility into Nova Scotia for teachers in targeted areas.

- The department will work with the NSCC (and Collège de l'Acadie) and the universities in the development of a special needs policy, embracing common principles for students with disabilities participating in post-secondary training, and ensure that each college and university campus has assistive technology workstations provided for students with disabilities.

- The recommended expansion of the community college enrolments will enable NSCC to double the number of IPP students attending the college and enhance enrolments in trades and technology and other areas of strategic importance. In addition, the department, through its Employability Assistance for People with Disabilities (EAPD) programs, will expand its Transition to Employment program (in the summer) for graduating students with disabilities.

- The department will track eligible students with disabilities and their retention and graduation rates from the NSCC and universities, as well as their success rates in making the transition to employment. (In conjunction with Skills and Learning)

- The department will continue to assist the public library system in providing the best possible service to meet the information needs of Nova Scotians by conducting a review of the funding formula for the public library systems with specific reference to critical mass and the counter-pull of demography. (In conjunction with Corporate Administrative Services)

3. Skills and Learning

- The department will coordinate and contribute to a variety of initiatives aimed at developing a skilled and adaptable workforce and promoting healthy, active learning communities and families.

- As lead department for skills, the Department of Education will work with other provincial government departments and agencies to develop a 2003–04 Skills Nova Scotia Action Plan and create a Partners' Advisory Forum to advise government on the broad issues and opportunities within Nova Scotia's labour market. The governments of Canada and Nova Scotia (through Education as lead), will work together to ensure that the Labour Market Development Agreement advances the joint priorities under the Canada/Nova Scotia Skills and Innovation Framework (Apprenticeship, Learning and Earning; Employability; Immigration; and Labour Market Information).
- The department will take on the responsibilities of the Forum of Labour Market Ministers Secretariat (FLMM) for a period of two years beginning in April 2003. The secretariat facilitates interjurisdictional discussion and co-operation between the federal and provincial/territorial governments on labour market issues.
- The department will work with partners to develop labour market information products and services that inform the skill development and labour market decisions of individuals, business and labour, policy makers, and education providers.
- The department will create funding mechanisms to support strategic investment and action through targeted initiatives and conclude a memorandum of understanding with the Association of Industry Sector Councils to undertake joint planning around skill development initiatives.
- The department will collaborate with the Office of Economic Development (lead agency) to implement the new Provincial Nominee Agreement to assist in meeting the labour market skill needs of Nova Scotia.
- The department will initiate a service-mapping project, which will inventory current career development and employment services provided to Nova Scotians, identify gaps in service, and provide the foundation for a comprehensive career and employment strategy.

- Under the Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning (NSSAL), the department will continue, through partnerships, to administer and coordinate a system of programs for adults seeking to improve their literacy and essential skills and/or obtain the Nova Scotia High School Graduation Diploma for Adults. Priority will be given to piloting a student information system and implementing guidelines and procedures for the Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) component of the diploma. In addition, distance education will be explored as an alternative delivery method to facilitate access to the diploma for adults.
- The curriculum development process will include review, evaluation, and enhancement of the existing Adult Learning Program courses and the Formation générale des adultes, as well as formalizing curriculum links to employability. Through its seven Regional Planning Teams and the Francophone Advisory Committee, the department will continue to work closely with NSCC, Université Sainte-Anne/Collège de l'Acadie, school boards, community-based learning organizations, Human Resources Development Canada, and the Department of Community Services. These teams will coordinate communication and outreach projects to implement referral protocols and provide professional development opportunities to service providers, funding agencies, and career and employment counselling agencies, ensuring that adult learners are appropriately served, referred, and counselled.

- Priorities for the Community Learning Initiative (CLI) this year include the implementation of a provincial service agreement and the development of strategies to facilitate learner transitions. Particular emphasis will be placed on partnering with the community-based sector to develop strategies to link community programs to employability and essential skills issues.

- The department will work with the Department of Justice and other organizations to support the Justice Reintegration Project. This project is seeking to enhance educational options for adults incarcerated or in conflict with the law, by developing improved assessment and referral tools and tutor training.

- The department will support pilot projects funded under the Older Workers Pilot Project Initiative and create a toolkit and professional development for practitioners to help workers 55 and older improve their skills and find employment.

- Under the Workplace Education and Workforce Adjustment/Attachment Initiatives, the department will expand the Essential Skills for Small Business program, particularly for the African Nova Scotian community; continue to support the Devco Career Opportunity Centre and the Sysco Job Transition Centre to assist displaced workers; implement Phase II of the Apprenticeship Essential Skills Initiative; and finalize a partnership with the Department of Community Services to support labour market attachment/essential skills programs for income assistance recipients.

- In response to business and labour needs, the department will significantly enhance provision of apprenticeship training and client service over the next five years. To achieve this, training will be provided for 45 per cent of active apprentices in 2003–04. In addition, the division will develop a strategy to achieve a ratio of 250 apprentices for each Industrial Training and Certification Officer.

- Other initiatives will include continuing to work with Atlantic partners (Newfoundland, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island) in the development and production of common trade standards; continuing co-operation with interprovincial partners on Canada-wide development of occupational analyses and examinations; implementing an essential skills assessment process and developing Individualized Learning Plans for all new apprentices by the end of 2004–05; extending activity in the recognition of prior learning; and initiating the development and implementation of course-ending examinations for all apprenticeship programs (by the end of the five-year period).
- The department will actively promote careers in skilled trades and engage in strategic partnerships leading to a vibrant Apprenticeship Program by establishing a youth apprenticeship program by the end of 2003–04 and engaging partners in coordinating promotional/awareness campaigns.
- The department will work though the recommendations in *Apprenticeship—Achieving Excellence Through Partnership* with business, labour, and training provider partners.
- The department will conduct a second Youth Decision Survey to determine the level of knowledge about skilled trade careers among our youth and to assess progress since the 2000 survey.
- The department will revise the Youth Secretariat Act to strengthen the mandate of the secretariat to work across departmental boundaries, maximize benefits of available resources, and achieve more beneficial outcomes for Nova Scotia's youth.
- The department will achieve meaningful dialogue with Nova Scotia's youth through supporting the work of the Youth Advisory Council and the Provincial Student Education Council to create a strong and effective voice for youth and to inform better policy decisions surrounding youth issues and issues affecting youth.
- The department will coordinate the Provincial Employment Program to ensure efficient and effective delivery of the Nova Scotia Employment Program for Students and the Co-operative Employment Program.

- The department will pursue a partnership with the HeartWood Institute, a charitable organization that focuses on youth and mentor volunteers, to create and support the Centre of Excellence on Youth Engagement.
- The department will facilitate innovative partnerships such as the one with the Halifax Youth Foundation to encourage family involvement in learning. It will work with the Colchester East Hants Library and a Provincial Advisory Committee to develop an action plan for family literacy and continue to explore the development of good-practice guidelines to shape the creation of quality programs.
- The department will work with hospital and community partners to advance Phase II of the infant gift-book program, Read to Me!, which supports learning development in our youngest citizens.

4. Corporate Policy

- In response to the *Education Consultative Forum (ECF) Sub-Committee Report on Teacher Supply and Demand,* an early hiring job fair was held in January and February, 2003 involving the department, all Nova Scotia school boards, the Nova Scotia School Boards Association (NSSBA), and the Nova Scotia Teachers Union (NSTU). This was undertaken to address current and potential teacher shortages in certain subject areas. An evaluation will be conducted to determine the success of the initiative in supporting school boards in addressing their labour market needs.
- Also in response to projected shortages in the supply of teachers, a survey of substitute teachers and recent graduates is being undertaken to examine issues and concerns related to substituting in Nova Scotia. Survey results will be available early in the spring of 2003.

- The department will continue discussions with Citizenship and Immigration Canada to finalize negotiations on a new framework agreement. This agreement will more clearly define roles and responsibilities between the federal and provincial governments, facilitate closer collaboration in the development of immigration policies appropriate to the province's needs, and support joint planning efforts to meet immigrant settlement needs in Nova Scotia.
- Working with the Metropolitan Immigration Settlement Association (MISA), the department will undertake a feasibility study to assess the need for a credential recognition service to support immigrants' access to the labour market and post-secondary education system. (In conjunction with Higher Education and Skills and Learning)
- Over the next year, the department will develop an Elementary Literacy Assessment Database to assist with the administration and tracking of the grade 6 literacy testing. (In conjunction with Primary–12 Education)
- The department will continue to enhance current information systems, system integration, data collection processes, and statistical services supporting the Nova Scotia public school information needs of the department and other educational stakeholders.

5. Corporate Administrative Services

- The department will fulfil its mandate of identifying school capital needs through the continual operation of the School Capital Construction Committee, which will report to government on prioritization of capital funding needs for Nova Scotia schools. The department will continue the delivery of school capital projects approved in July 2000, scheduled for delivery by 2005. Three additional schools were approved for construction in 2001–02, bringing the total to 19. Seven of the schools were completed in 2001–02. In 2002–03, an additional two schools were completed, and another six are under construction. Five new school construction projects are now in progress with additional school construction to start in fiscal year 2003–04. The school capital program is under review and an announcement of additional new school construction and addition/alteration projects is anticipated early in the 2003–04 fiscal year.

- An addition and alteration program to enhance and/or replace major school building components on a priority basis will continue. The department will work with school boards and other provincial departments to identify and resolve environmental problems. Eight schools are now being added to and altered under a phased multi-year program to address building condition, environmental, and program issues at these schools. A database of school renovation and maintenance needs will be developed in conjunction with school boards. This database will assist the department in establishing renovation and maintenance needs for schools in 2003–04 and beyond. (In conjunction with Primary–12 Education)
- Availability of school facilities for purposes other than education varies across the province, in terms of ease of access, rates, and hours of availability. A policy framework has been developed to equalize access, standardize rates charged, and ensure that facilities are available for community and youth use for as many hours as possible. In 2003–04, the department will introduce the policy framework and assist school boards to effectively adjust their present practices. (In conjunction with Primary–12 Education)
- Implementation of the Human Resources and Payroll (SAP) modules in school boards will continue. This is part of a larger initiative to improve the administrative systems of school boards. In fiscal year 2001–02, SAP's finance and procurement modules were implemented. The project to implement the human resources and payroll modules is being undertaken jointly with the provincial government, which is also putting these modules in place. The initiative was started in 2002–03 and will continue through 2003–04 with an anticipated end date in fiscal 2004–05. (In conjunction with Primary–12 Education)

- The Human Resources and Legal Services Branch, introduced in 2002–03, will continue to implement the plan to provide enhanced support activities both internally and to school boards. This support is associated with the move to single-tier bargaining, putting into operation the new Teachers' Provincial Agreement, and the fulfilment of the human resources aspects of the Financial Measures Act and to maximize the value of dollars spent for legal advice. It will also support school boards in addressing current and emerging issues and enhancing effective human resources planning in the education system. (In conjunction with Primary–12 Education, Corporate Policy)
- In fiscal year 2003–04, the Department of Education will continue to work with school boards to explore funding models that ensure equity in the distribution of public education funds. (In conjunction with Primary–12 Education)
- The department will undertake a review of facilities operations in the Southwest Regional School Board to determine the standard of service and the efficiency of service delivery and to ensure that these meet provincial standards. (In conjunction with Primary–12 Education)
- The department will continue to work with the Nova Scotia School Boards Association (NSSBA) to improve school board governance. Improvements will be made to the processes and systems used to monitor and report school board activity. (In conjunction with Primary–12 Education)
- As well, the department will work with the school boards operating under the pilot governance model to improve their administrative structures and processes. The department will monitor and evaluate these changes with a view to potential structures when the pilots are scheduled to end in 2004 in accordance with the Education Act.

Energy

Mission

To supervise, direct, and exercise control over all affairs and matters relating to the exploration, development, and use of energy, including oil and gas, electricity, renewable energy, and other natural resources when used for the production of energy.

Strategic Goals

The Department of Energy has three strategic goals that guide our day-to-day operations.

Economic Growth

The Goal. A world-class energy sector that achieves sustainable economic development in balance with high social and environmental standards.

The Reason. Nova Scotia is fortunate to have access to a wide variety of indigenous energy resources, including coal, wind, wood fibre, natural gas, and hydro power. We have an opportunity to realize significant benefits from the development and use of these resources but must do so in a manner that enriches the social fabric of the province and enhances the environment.

The Result. Nova Scotia will continue to reap the benefits of a growing energy sector that makes significant contributions to our economy, provides new opportunities for Nova Scotians, and explores new ways to preserve and protect our environment. The energy sector will also provide opportunities to achieve international competitiveness for Nova Scotia–based businesses in many sectors, including those that use local energy resources. Nova Scotia will become a recognized leader in new technologies and will attract new business worldwide through innovation and the commercialization of our research and development in the energy sector.

Social and Economic Benefits

The Goal. Reap the economic and social benefits of the province's rapidly expanding offshore energy sector.

The Reason. Our offshore oil and gas industry, although in its infancy, is expanding rapidly. The significant potential for future discoveries and developments holds the promise of employment for Nova Scotians, revenue for the provincial government to support social programs and initiatives, and direct and indirect benefits throughout the economy for current and future generations.

The Result. Nova Scotia will become a more prosperous province with a skilled workforce ready to take on the challenges of the new oil and gas industry and with a plan for the continued exploration, development, and management of our natural resources.

Environment

The Goal. A cleaner environment and a better quality of life for Nova Scotians.

The Reason. As our energy sector evolves, we must be in a position to address environmental issues. We must plan to cut undesirable air emissions such as sulphur dioxide and particulate matter and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to make for a better future for our province and our planet. The impacts of oil and gas development on our oceans must also be addressed.

The Result. Through conservation, renewable energy resources and the responsible development of our offshore, Nova Scotia will continue to improve the quality of our environment and contribute to the national efforts to address climate change.

Core Business Areas

1. Promoting Economic Activity and Benefits

This area focuses on opportunities for existing industries and the attraction of new investment activity to the province, as well as maximizing the benefits available to the province from such investment.

Programs and services in this area are designed to encourage the growth of the Nova Scotia economy in an environmentally responsible manner, help ensure a secure supply of energy for the provincial economy, and promote local procurement, employment, and training. Existing and new energy opportunities will continue to provide a significant component of the provincial economy. The province, through the Department of Energy, will vigorously pursue opportunities to maximize the value of all its energy resources.

Major programs include the following:

- ensuring that the principal components of the province's fiscal and regulatory regimes are competitive with other regions of the continent and the world
- economic analysis of the financial and social benefits and costs of energy development and use

- promoting Nova Scotia's energy opportunities at industry events such as regional, national, and international trade shows, conferences, and other promotional opportunities
- assessing the competitive position of the Province of Nova Scotia in relation to future energy industry opportunities
- geophysical and geological analysis of oil and gas resources
- identifying industrial development and infrastructure opportunities
- understanding the impacts and benefits of electricity deregulation
- working with private sector organizations to advance the province's manufacturing and technical capabilities
- advancing industry's knowledge of the resource potential of both the onshore and offshore areas of Nova Scotia
- maintaining inventories of Nova Scotian capabilities and contract opportunities
- analysing the effectiveness and efficiency of regulatory processes and making improvements where necessary
- assessing energy research and development opportunities

2. Informing, Educating, and Advising Nova Scotians on Energy Issues

This area involves making Nova Scotians aware of the vast array of energy-related opportunities available to them in such areas as the energy choice, employment and training, wise use of energy, and the economic and environmental consequences of energy development and use. It also involves supporting the development of formal opportunities for training and apprenticeship to enable Nova Scotians to gain employment in the energy sector.

Major programs include the following:

- promoting employment opportunities for Nova Scotians in the energy marketplace
- in conjunction with Nova Scotia educational institutions, developing and supporting energy related education programs
- developing and administering programs designed to provide information to Nova Scotians on wise energy choices

- understanding and educating the public on the economic impact of the energy industry in the province
- keeping the public of Nova Scotia informed on energy related issues within the province, across the country, and internationally
- understanding the types and supply of labour skills necessary for success in the energy sector
- informing organizations, companies, and the public on the likely impacts of major policies such as climate change
- supporting the development of formal opportunities for on the job training and apprenticeship to enable Nova Scotians to earn employment in the energy sector

3. Representing the Interests of the Province before Regulators, Other Governments, and Agencies

This area involves putting Nova Scotia's position before those organizations that have direct and indirect control over portions of Nova Scotia's energy industry.

Programs and services in this area include appearing before foreign, federal, and provincial quasi-judicial regulatory bodies to present the province's interests with respect to the implications of proposals being brought forward by industry. This area also includes making the province's views known to other levels of government and private-sector organizations when new policies, legislation, and programs are being developed. In this way, the department helps to ensure that the energy industry develops in a manner consistent with the province's overall strategy.

Major programs include the following:

- effectively communicating the province's position, policy, and priorities to the Canada–Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board (CNSOPB) in relation to the exploration, development, and production of oil and gas in the offshore area
- interventions before the provincial Utility and Review Board in areas such as natural gas distribution and electricity
- interventions before the National Energy Board and the United States Federal Energy Regulatory Commission in such areas as federal energy policy, interprovincial and international pipeline expansions, pipeline tolls, and energy exports from Canada

- regular interaction with the federal governments of both Canada and the United States and with municipalities to promote the interests of Nova Scotians
- continuing to advise the Minister as to obligations under the Canada–Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Resources Accord Implementation (Nova Scotia) Act, which include both reacting to fundamental discussions and providing policy direction to the CNSOPB

4. Administering Contracts, Agreements, Rights, and Memorandums of Understanding with Public and Private-Sector Partners

This area involves ensuring that the province's rights and obligations under binding agreements are met.

In administering the province's energy opportunities, the province enters into a number of agreements with the private sector, other governments, and government agencies. In order to ensure that obligations on both sides are realized, the department is in constant communication with its partners on the status of the agreements, information exchange, financial terms, negotiation of necessary adjustments, and renewals and terminations. The department is also active in undertaking the necessary steps to deliver on its specific obligations under such agreements.

Major programs include the following:

- issuing and managing the rights to explore for, produce, and store hydrocarbons onshore Nova Scotia
- managing royalty agreements with petroleum producers
- reviewing and monitoring benefits plans
- administering memorandums of understanding and agreements with industrial partners
- administering funding agreements with various organizations such as educational institutions, research organizations, and engineering groups
- negotiating and implementing Nova Scotia's energy obligations under regional, national, and international treaties and agreements
- assessing the impacts, opportunities, and costs of the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol
- designing and implementing energy efficiency and renewable energy programs
- negotiating major pipeline toll settlements

Priorities for 2003–2004

1. Promoting Economic Activity and Benefits

Priority: Completing the work of the Electricity Market Governance Committee

Established under the province's Energy Strategy in 2001, the Committee is responsible for recommending the terms under which the electricity market in Nova Scotia is restructured. Specific areas of concentration include opening up of the electricity transmission system, electricity sales to the wholesale market, rules governing the construction of new generation facilities and generation from renewable energy sources. The Committee's final report will be delivered to government early in the fiscal year. Approved recommendations must then be translated into legislation in 2003–04.

Priority: Help to ensure the development of gas distribution in Nova Scotia

Through participation in regulatory proceedings before the UARB, coordinating government administration of gas franchisees, and direct liaison with gas distributors, the province will pursue the realization of gas distribution in fiscal 2003–04. Two regulatory proceedings and several government approvals will take place during the year.

Priority: Identifying challenges and opportunities associated with deep-water development with particular emphasis on deep-water technology

Exploration in Nova Scotia's offshore is moving into the deeper water of the slope. The technology required to explore and develop oil and gas resources in this environment is significantly different than that employed in the shallower water of the Scotian Shelf. The department will be undertaking an assessment of the opportunities presented by this technology in the areas of research, development, fabrication, construction and employment.

Priority: Continue to promote the province at major oil and gas trade shows

The offshore oil and gas sector continues to be a worldwide competitive industry in terms of attracting exploration activity and development investment. The department will present technical papers on Nova Scotia's oil and gas potential at conferences and prospect exchanges and lead provincial delegations to major offshore trade shows in Aberdeen, Houston, and Calgary to promote the province as an oil and gas investment opportunity. This effort supports the top oil and gas priority of the energy strategy—to encourage further oil and gas petroleum exploration.

Priority: Enhancing local benefits opportunities

As a follow-up to the Atlantic Energy Roundtable, the department will be working with the federal government, the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, and the private sector to improve our offshore fabrication and supply capacity through identifying and matching business opportunities with Nova Scotian companies and promoting Nova Scotia's fabrication and supply companies at trade shows.

2. Informing, Educating, and Advising Nova Scotians on Energy Issues

Priority: Ensure the Nova Scotia workforce is positioned to take advantage of employment opportunities in the energy sector

In order to maximize employment opportunities from offshore activity, Nova Scotians must be properly informed and advised of the projected skills demand areas and be educated and trained in relevant disciplines so that they are positioned for employment. Initiatives will include identifying the demand for and timely collection and dissemination of relevant labour market information, providing energy-sector information to secondary schools, leveraging co-op or summer work terms in the private sector for post-secondary students, addressing requests for information on energy sector employment and training, working closely with industry and post-secondary education institutions to help ensure that students receive the skills and training necessary for employment, and holding a private/public sector energy skills forum to identify solutions to major labour issues projected for the sector in the next 5–10 years.

Priority: Improve the understanding of energy issues in Nova Scotia

Energy use and development touch the lives of all Nova Scotians. Public information programs will be developed to create a high level of public understanding of issues such as climate change, the exploration and development of oil and natural gas, and electricity and renewable energy. Public education initiatives will include video, print resources and training for educators; the creation of a library of publications and other information relating to energy issues; school and community-based educational tours; development of print materials and Web site information; continued information sharing and issue resolution with fishery and coastal communities; and the creation of a public education working group that will identify innovative means of educating Nova Scotians on energy issues.

3. Representing the Interests of the Province before Regulators, Other Governments, and Agencies

Priority: Presenting the province's views on the Deep Panuke Project

EnCana has requested and received a suspension of the public review of the Deep Panuke Project by the National Energy Board and the Canada Nova-Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board. The Department of Energy will continue to discuss the future of the project with EnCana and participate directly in any regulatory proceedings that are reinstated by the regulatory boards.

Priority: Approval of gas distribution construction, tolls, and tariffs

The Utility and Review Board has issued a gas distribution franchise to Heritage Gas and a conditional approval to Strait Area Gas. Heritage will be required to obtain subsequent approvals for the installation of pipe, operation of their distribution system, and their tolls and tariffs. The department will be active in UARB proceedings in order to help ensure the early development of a distribution system, in a manner that meets the goals of the Energy Strategy. The department will also continue to help coordinate the various approvals by other government departments at both the federal and provincial levels. The department also plans to be directly involved in the second phase of the regulatory review of the Strait Area application.

4. Administering Contracts, Agreements, Rights, and Memorandums of Understanding with Public and Private-Sector Partners

Priority: Administration of the SOEP Royalty Agreements

Nova Scotia has royalty agreements with each of the Sable Offshore Energy Project (SOEP) partners. In order to ensure that Nova Scotia's royalty expectations are being met, ongoing administration of these agreements is necessary. The province will also establish a Nova Scotia Offshore Heritage Fund for the benefit of future generations. The Heritage Fund will receive and manage a meaningful portion of offshore revenues so that Nova Scotians, today and in the future, benefit from these non-renewable resources.

Priority: Administering the Nova Scotia Accord back-in rights.

Under the Offshore Accord, the province has the right to acquire at least 50 per cent of any trunk line built in the offshore area. The province will reassess the exercise of this right in the Deep Panuke Project, once the regulatory status of the project has been clarified.

Priority: Working with other stakeholders to make the oil and gas regulatory system more efficient and effective.

In co-operation with the Canada–Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board, the National Energy Board, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, and Natural Resources Canada, the province will continue to consult with petroleum producers and support industries in order to set priorities in this area. Specific steps to be taken include follow-up discussions from the Atlantic Energy Roundtable, resolution of occupational health issues in the offshore, and work associated with the Eastern Scotian Shelf Integrated Management Initiative.

Priority: Implementing Nova Scotia's obligations under the national climate change process

The province will continue to be active as part of the national process to determine burden sharing and provincial obligations following ratification of the Kyoto Protocol. In the meantime, the department will continue to implement its Climate Change Strategy in order to meet those national obligations. As more becomes known on the specifics of Nova Scotia's obligations, the department will make ongoing adjustments to its provincial Climate Change Strategy. Existing priorities in the Climate Change Strategy include substitutions to lower carbon fuels and a wide variety of energy efficiency measures.

Environment and Labour

Mission

To protect and promote the safety of people and property, a healthy environment, employment rights, the interests of financial services consumers and pension plan members, and consumer interests and public confidence in the alcohol and gaming services sectors.

Strategic Goals

- Promote safe and healthy workplaces/work practices and safe facilities and equipment.
- Promote sustainable management and protection of the environment and natural areas.
- Promote employment standards, fair processes for wage compensation, effective labour-management relations, and fairness for injured workers.
- Promote and protect the interests of financial services consumers and pension plan members.
- Promote consumer protection in gaming/amusement activities and the service of alcohol.
- Carry out the department's regulatory mandate in accordance with an overall model for regulatory management based on best practices and continuous improvement principles and developed in consultation with stakeholders, including industry, government partners, NGOs, and the public.

Core Business Areas

1. Environmental Protection and Natural Areas Management

The department promotes sustainable management and protection of the environment by developing and implementing plans, standards, guidelines, and policies for the management and protection of Nova Scotia's air, water, and terrestrial resources, including protected areas, and by providing regionally based regulatory approval, inspection, monitoring, and enforcement services, which are delivered through the following programs:

- environmental monitoring, inspection, and compliance
- water and wastewater management
- solid waste resource management
- protected areas
- environmental services

- environmental assessment
- environmental industries
- environmental innovation
- environmental education

2. Public Safety and Occupational Health and Safety

The department promotes safe and healthy workplaces and safe facilities and equipment by developing and enforcing safety standards and by providing related educational and consulting support, through the following programs:

- occupational health and safety standard development
- occupational health and safety inspections, investigations, and enforcement
- fire prevention, inspection, investigation, and education
- fuel safety inspection and education
- boiler safety inspection
- elevators, lifts, and amusement devices safety
- electrical safety
- certification of specified tradespersons
- construction of safe buildings

3. Alcohol, Gaming, and Amusements Regulation

The department promotes consumer protection in gaming/amusement activities and the service of alcohol, through the following programs:

- licensing and registration
- investigation and enforcement
- film classification

4. Employment Standards and Labour Services

The department promotes employment standards, fair processes for wage compensation, effective labour-management relations, and fairness for injured workers through the following programs:

- labour standards
- conciliation/mediation services
- Workers' Advisers program

The department also provides administrative support and coordination to the following agencies, boards, commissions, and tribunals, which provide adjudicative services for the resolution of employment- or labour-related disputes:

- Labour Relations Board/Construction Industry Panel
- Labour Standards Tribunal

- Occupational Health and Safety Appeal Panel
- Crane Operators Appeal Panel
- Power Engineers and Operators Appeal Committee.

5. Pension and Financial Services Regulation

The department promotes and protects the interests of financial services consumers and pension plan members through delivery of the following programs:

- trust and loan companies licensing and regulation
- credit unions regulation
- insurance industry regulation
- pension regulation.

Priorities for 2003–2004

1. Environmental Protection and Natural Areas Management

- Develop proposed amendments to the Environment Act to update, clarify, and strengthen the act and to allow departmental resources to be refocused on areas of greatest risk to human health and the environment.
- Manage and protect Nova Scotia's drinking water supplies through implementation of the action plan outlined in A Drinking Water Strategy for Nova Scotia.
- Propose regulatory amendments to the Air Quality Regulations that will achieve sulphur dioxide emission reduction targets outlined in Nova Scotia's Energy Strategy and work with major facilities to develop plans that address provincial commitments to meet the Canada-wide Standards for Particulate Matter and Ozone.
- Promote conservation of natural areas on private land through stewardship approaches in partnership, with land owners, conservation organizations, and other government departments.

Priorities That Contribute to Red Tape Reduction

- Implement a risk-based system for the delivery of environmental inspection, monitoring, and compliance services.

2. Public Safety and Occupational Health and Safety

- Develop components of the strategic plan for the Workplace Safety and Insurance system that relate to delivery of OHS programs and services.
- Participate in regional and national interjurisdictional co-operative initiatives to promote health and safety in the workplace. Activities supporting this priority will include
  - the Atlantic Action Plan Initiative on Occupational Safety and Health under the auspices of the Council of Atlantic Premiers
  - the Cross-Canada Young Worker Initiative sponsored by the Canadian Association of Administrators of Labour Legislation (CAALL, a multi-faceted initiative designed to address the disproportionate incidence of workplace injuries experienced by young workers (one-third of all work injuries happen to workers aged 15–24)
- Develop legislative proposals for amendments to the Boilers and Pressure Vessel Act and regulations and the Amusement Services Act and regulations, designed to replace outdated legislation and support current business practices and technology standards.
- Develop a provincial plan in partnership with the Emergency Measures Organization, Department of Health, and Department of Justice for a rationalized response capability by first responders to incidents involving hazardous materials and bio-terrorism.

Priorities That Contribute to Red Tape Reduction

- Conduct ongoing reviews of OHS legislation to meet provisions of proposed sunset clause, recommendations of the Red Tape Reduction Task Force, government's legislative agenda, and ongoing program evaluation and review.
- Increase the number of licences, permits, and application processes handled by the Department of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations in order to improve access and provide multiple payment options for clients of our services, while, at the same time, decreasing transaction costs for government.

- Review the regulatory process for wood and oil fuels installations and fire protection systems to assess feasibility of introducing self-regulatory programs.

3. Alcohol, Gaming, and Amusements Regulation

- Initiate policy and regulatory procedures required to support compliance programs relating to the Smoke-free Places Act.

4. Employment Standards and Labour Services

- Maintain existing service response times for conciliation requests as required under the Trade Union Act and continue to offer preventative mediation programs, in support of the collective bargaining agenda in both the public and private sectors anticipated for 2003–04.
- Complete a review of existing information/case management systems used by the six agencies, boards, commissions, and tribunals administered by the Labour Services Division and implement a common case-management/statistical database system, which ensures optimal use of staff and technology.
- Implement government decisions resulting from the department's annual review of Nova Scotia minimum wage rates conducted in 2002–03.
- Undertake a review of Labour Standards Division service delivery systems and introduce improved business processes.
- Develop components of the strategic plan for the Workplace Safety and Insurance system that relate to delivery of the Workers' Advisers Program.

5. Pension and Financial Services Regulation

- Review and revise model pension law principles following consultation.
- Provide policy analysis support on automobile insurance issues in Nova Scotia, including review and analysis of public input received in response to the discussion paper *The Road Ahead* and reporting on the results of the public consultation process.
- Review and respond to proposed amendments to the Credit Union Act received from the system committee examining the legislation, and prepare appropriate legislative amendments

Priorities That Contribute to Red Tape Reduction

- Develop proposed insurance legislation, harmonized within the Atlantic region, as well as harmonized general insurance agent regulations developed in consultation with the agents and brokers, educational service providers, and with regulators in the Atlantic region.

Department-wide Priorities

Priorities That Contribute to Red Tape Reduction:

- Develop a regulatory policy framework to improve the consistency, cost-effectiveness, and transparency of the department's regulatory management processes.

Finance

Mission

To establish a fiscal climate conducive to economic growth and to provide central agency support and policy direction for effective management of the province's finances and pensions administration.

Strategic Goals

- Enhance financial accountability and fiscal planning in the management and control of the province's finances.
- Achieve effective money management that maximizes return on investments and minimizes debt-servicing costs within acceptable risk tolerances.
- Provide for equitable, efficient, and effective taxation that promotes economic growth in a strategic way.
- Provide a core set of central agency services that supports other government departments and agencies in the management of the province's programs and public resources.

The strategic goals of the Department of Finance represent the achievements that are key to meeting our mission statement. The strategic goals are consistent with, and support, the overall priorities of the government within the context of fiscal sustainability and a balanced budget.

Core Business Areas

1. Financial Management

Ensure financial accountability in the management and control of the province's finances

- financial accountability and governance
- expenditure monitoring and reporting (shared with Treasury and Policy Board)
- accounting, payroll, and pension administration

2. Investment and Treasury Management

Achieve effective money management that maximizes return on investments and minimizes debt-servicing costs within risk tolerances acceptable to government

- managing the debt portfolio
- treasury function and investor relations
- managing the provincial pension funds

3. Fiscal Planning and Policy

Ensure responsible fiscal planning and budgeting that includes equitable, efficient, and effective taxation to promote economic growth in a strategic way

- fiscal planning and budgeting (shared with Treasury and Policy Board)
- revenue and economic forecasting
- tax policy/analysis and federal fiscal policies and arrangements

4. Central Agency Services

Provide a core set of central agency services that support the management of the province's programs and public resources, in addition to supporting the core business functions of the Department of Finance

- statistics
- economic policy and analysis
- internal audit

The department's core business areas directly support the priorities of government as reflected in the Throne Speech and government's stated commitments. Many activities within the core business areas reinforce these linkages. Economic development is enhanced with the overall fiscal health of the province and through effective taxation policies. The development of accountability mechanisms in legislation and regulations directly supports the government's directions. As an integral part of the department's culture, Finance is a dynamic organization that reviews its services on an ongoing basis and responds to client needs and feedback within its fiscal capacity. All aspects of the department's core business areas support achieving fiscal stability and building a responsive and accountable government.

Priorities for 2003–2004

The following details a list of programs or services delivered or administered by Finance that collectively address the mandate and strategic goals of the department.

1. Financial Management

- Improve overall fiscal management by producing relevant and timely financial reports and continue to monitor and report on the fiscal plan in a timely manner, in conjunction with Treasury and Policy Board.

- Enhance accountability and governance structures as they relate to public policy and administration of financial resources through the government's financial management policies and procedures and ensuring compliance with the Public Sector Accounting Board (PSAB) Guidelines and adherence to generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) for reporting financial results.
- Maintain timely and efficient payroll and government accounting services to government departments and agencies and maintain effective and efficient administration of pension services to plan members and beneficiaries.

2. Investment and Treasury Management

- Effectively manage financial risk, due to unforeseen events, in managing the investment assets and liabilities of the province.
- continue to reduce the province's foreign currency exposure.
- Improve investor relations by making strong presentations to rating agencies on our financial position.
- Effectively manage the assets of the Teachers' Pension Plan and Public Service Superannuation Plan and the pensions plans and insurance programs of the former Sydney Steel Corporation.

3. Fiscal Planning and Policy

- Support a prudent, sustainable, and balanced fiscal plan.
- Provide an assessment of the tax initiatives within the province to achieve a more competitive and responsive tax environment.
- Provide timely revenue forecasts essential to government's fiscal planning and budgeting
- Provide tax policy and advisory services to departments and agencies to ensure that new programs and services consider tax implications and are cost-effective in the use of public funds.
- Provide research, analysis, and advice on key federal-provincial issues and effectively represent Nova Scotia's interests in negotiations with other governments in such areas as federal transfer payments comprising equalization, the Canada Health and Social Transfer, and tax collection agreements.

4. Central Agency Services

- Provide government departments and agencies with advice on and access to a wide range of social and economic statistics to support evidence-based management and policy development.
- Provide economic impact, benefit-cost, and economic policy analysis to client departments and agencies for optimal use of public funds.
- Perform value-added corporate audit services to client departments and agencies for effectiveness of control structures and cost-effective usage of public funds.

Health

Mission

Through leadership and collaboration, to ensure an appropriate, effective, and sustainable health system that promotes, maintains, and improves the health of Nova Scotians.

Strategic Goals

Five strategic goals have been identified by the Department of Health for 2003–04:

- **Quality.** Ensure development and implementation of system standards supporting quality service delivery.
- **Access.** Facilitate the provision and promotion of equitable access to health services.
- **Wellness.** Champion wellness for improved health status of Nova Scotians.
- **Accountability.** Monitor, evaluate, and report on clearly articulated expectations for the health system and its governance.
- **Sustainability.** Ensure effective, efficient, and equitable allocation of available resources on an ongoing basis.

Core Business Areas

The Department of Health has seven core business areas:

- Population Health and Primary Health Care
- Mental Health Services
- Acute and Tertiary Care
- Insured Health Programs
- Emergency Health Services
- Continuing Care Services
- Provincial and Other Health Programs

1. Population Health and Primary Health Care

Population health refers to the health of a population as measured by health status indicators and as influenced by social, economic, and physical environments, personal health practices, individual capacity and coping skills, human biology, early childhood development, health services, culture, and gender. The goals of a population health approach are to maintain and improve the health status of the entire population and to reduce inequities in health status between population groups. This emphasis on population health is a priority for both the Department of Health and the Office of Health Promotion.

Primary health care includes primary care, which is the first point of contact that individuals have with the health-care system and the first element of a continuing care process. Primary health care includes prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of common illness or injury, support for emotional and mental health, ongoing management of chronic conditions, advice on self-care, ensuring healthy environments and communities, and coordination for access to other services and providers

Population Health and Primary Health Care provides leadership, direction, and support to the following services:

Addiction Services comprise a menu of components that are available according to the individual's needs and readiness. Services are delivered by the nine district health authorities (DHAs) and include

- withdrawal management (detoxification and treatment orientation programs)
- community-based programs (outpatients and structure treatment)
- prevention and community education (in schools, workplaces, and communities)
- problem gambling (specialized services including prevention and education)

Public Health Services are delivered to Nova Scotians through the DHAs. The staff work in partnership with communities, families, and individuals to prevent illness, protect and promote health, and achieve well-being. Activities are directed at an entire population, priority sub-populations or individuals in some circumstances. Major functions include population health assessment, health surveillance, population health advocacy, health promotion, disease/injury prevention, and health protection.[1]

Primary Health Care provides policy and planning support to redesigning a community-based primary health-care system for Nova Scotia. Changes might include, for example, increasing the number of community-based primary health-care organizations, more interdisciplinary teams, better linkages to other parts of the health-care system, and increased emphasis on health promotion. The currently operating

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[1] The creation of an Office of Health Promotion was announced by the Government in December, 2002. Its mandate is to facilitate communication, cooperation, collaboration and action among individuals, organizations, sectors and government departments to achieve a healthier population. A separate business plan has been developed for the Office of Health Promotion.

Strengthening Primary Care in Nova Scotia Communities Initiative is piloting new ways to fund, deliver, and manage primary care in four Nova Scotia communities using collaborative practice between nurse practitioners and physicians, electronic information systems, and alternatives to fee-for-service payment for physicians.

2. Mental Health Services

The Department of Health, Mental Health Division, is responsible for setting standards, monitoring, and funding mental health services. Mental Health services for children, youth, and adults are delivered through the nine DHAs and the IWK Health Centre. Core programs, across the life span, include secondary prevention and promotion; outpatient services; acute, short-stay, and long-term psychiatric inpatients; specialty mental health services; and community supports. Services are consumer and family focused and community based where possible. Some mental health services are delivered through a shared-care model.

All DHAs and the IWK Hospital provide outpatient services through 50 community-based mental health clinics. Psychiatric inpatient units exist in all districts except DHA 5 where arrangements are made with DHA 4. In addition, there are a number of day treatment programs, psycho-social rehabilitation programs, and specialty mental health services. Other services include psycho-geriatrics, adult and youth forensic services, and sex offender treatment programs.

3. Acute and Tertiary Care

Acute or hospital care comprises secondary and tertiary care services delivered by the nine DHAs and the IWK Health Centre. Acute Care is delivered in 37 facilities, which are governed and managed by the DHAs. Funding is provided by the Department of Health in accordance with the Canada Health Act and the Health Services and Insurance Act.

Each district has community and district facilities with services that vary according to the type and level of emergency care provided, the hours of operation and access to ambulatory care provided, and the type and level of service provided to their inpatient populations. Inpatient services range from general practitioner services at the community facility level through to varied specialist services at the district level. Specialist services in district hospitals may include cardiology, respirology, gastroenterology, high-risk obstetrics, otolaryngology, orthopaedics, ophthalmology, pathology, psychiatry, pediatrics, urology, plastic surgery, maxillofacial surgery, oncology, neurology, dermatology, and endocrinology.

The Queen Elizabeth II Health Sciences Centre and the Izaak Walton Killam Hospital in Halifax are the two provincial health-care centres (PHCCs). These centres provide specialized services such as neurosurgery, specialized pediatrics, burn ICU, cardiac surgery, transplantation programs, cardio-thoracic surgery, immunology, and hematology, as well as all the services available in the community and district facilities. The PHCCs also provide the highest level of emergency services.

4. Insured Health Programs

In addition to hospital services, the Department of Health also funds medical or physician services for Nova Scotians under the terms of the Canada Health Act and the Health Services and Insurance Act. Under the legislation, insured physician services are those services that a qualified and licensed physician deems are medically necessary to diagnose, treat, rehabilitate, or otherwise alter a disease pattern.

Other publicly funded health programs include seniors' and other Pharmacare programs, a children's dental program, and other services for specific populations such as optometry, prosthetics, and dental surgery.

5. Emergency Health Services

Emergency Health Services (EHS) is the division of the Department of Health that is responsible for the continual development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of pre-hospital emergency health services for the province. Since 1995, the ambulance system has undergone a transformation from primarily a transportation system to a pre-hospital medical system with a province-wide fleet of well-equipped ambulances. The ambulances are staffed by registered paramedics who perform life-saving procedures and can administer a wide range of medications.

The main components of EHS are a communications centre, a ground ambulance service, an air medical transport program (EHS Life Flight), a provincial trauma program, a medical first-responders program, and the Atlantic Health Training and Simulation Centre. All system components are monitored by physicians specially trained in emergency care.

6. Continuing Care Services

Continuing Care is a system of delivering an integrated continuum of health and social services to support the independence and well-being of individuals with an identified need. Services include nursing homes, homes for the aged, residential care facilities, small option homes, community residences, adult protection, home oxygen, and acute and chronic home care services. In most cases, the need for care and support is long term, however, short-term needs are also met through the home care program. The Department of Health is primarily responsible for services to seniors, but younger adults are also served through our nursing homes, home care services, and adult protection programs.

The Continuing Care Program has three main components:

- **Administration.** Provides executive and operational management functions for Continuing Care services, including planning, budgeting, human resource, and support activities.
- **Assessment/Coordination Services.** Performs intake, assessment, service planning, resource authorization, and ongoing case management functions on behalf of Continuing Care clients, ensuring that appropriate services are identified, implemented, and monitored.
- **Care Services.** The health-care and support services available to individuals through Continuing Care programs include nursing care, personal care, home support, rehabilitation, respiratory therapy services, palliative care, and respite. Care may be provided in a client's home or in a facility where the client is accommodated.

7. Provincial and Other Health Programs

The Department of Health funds a number of arm's-length agencies that plan and coordinate service delivery and standards setting to ensure consistency and quality of care and service delivery. Agencies such as Cancer Care Nova Scotia, the Nova Scotia Trauma Program, Diabetes Care Nova Scotia, and the Reproductive Care Program bring together experts in care provision to establish standards based on best practice, research evidence, and stakeholder input. Through these agencies, strong networks of professionals participate in the rapid transmission and uptake of new knowledge and standards. Data are collected to enable monitoring of compliance with standards and outcomes of service delivery.

In keeping with its mission, the department also provides grants and funding to a variety of agencies and organizations across the province to provide advocacy and specific health-related services to targeted populations.

Priorities for 2003–04

Department of Health priorities for 2003–04 flow from our five strategic goals and are grouped by the core business area. Because of our integrated, multi-disciplinary, and cross-functional approach to health service planning and service delivery, most priorities affect or flow from more than one goal and core business area.

Sections 1 through 6 contain the priorities of the Department of Health and the health system for 2003–04. Sections 7 and 8 list priorities in strategic support areas that are broader than any single core business area—Health Information Management and Health Human Resources. These priorities describe new or renewed areas of emphasis in their respective core business areas. These are in addition to the baseline activities in each core business area as broadly described in this business plan.

1. Population Health and Primary Health Care

Additional Primary Health Care Nurse Practitioner Positions

- During 2002–03 eight new nurse practitioner positions for Nova Scotia's primary health-care system were funded to augment primary health-care services currently provided and to fill a long-standing service gap in many Nova Scotia communities.
- Support for the nurse practitioner education program will be maintained in 2003–04, and district health authorities will continue their development of innovative primary health-care initiatives.

Diversity and Social Inclusion Awareness in Primary Health Care

- Nova Scotia's vision for primary health care recognizes the need for primary health-care services that value and respond to the "cultural, racial, and spiritual experiences of individuals, families, and communities." It requires that equity of access be established for those who have historically faced barriers for reasons including race, ethnicity, language, and culture, understanding that these and related factors affect health.

- Diversity and Social Inclusion in Primary Health Care is an initiative to raise awareness of diversity and social inclusion issues (primarily related to race, language, and culture) across a broad range of stakeholders within the primary health-care system. In 2003–04, the Department of Health will involve primary health-care leaders and culturally diverse populations in the development of guidelines and policies that address diversity and social inclusion issues in primary health care.

Provincial Blood Transfusion Program

- This new program will be responsible for implementing and evaluating initiatives related to transfusion therapy and alternatives to help ensure that blood-related products are efficiently, effectively, and safely administered across the province.
- The program has three initial specific objectives
  - to establish and maintain a program to optimize the utilization of blood products and their alternatives
  - to establish and maintain a surveillance program for adverse reactions and major errors related to transfusion therapy
  - to ensure that appropriate standards regarding blood transfusion therapy are being implemented and maintained within health-care facilities in Nova Scotia

Chronic Disease Prevention Strategy Infrastructure

- Understanding that chronic diseases are the leading causes of death in Nova Scotia, the Department of Health is developing a provincial Chronic Disease Prevention Strategy through the Unit for Population Health and Chronic Disease Prevention at Dalhousie University. Recommendations for action will be presented during 2003–04. Effective coordination is required during the implementation of the strategy to ensure integration within the department, with the Office of Health Promotion, across government, and around the province.

Primary Health Care (Phase 3) Service Planning

- The Department of Health has undertaken several phases of health services planning. In 2003–04 the Primary Health Care (Phase 3) Service Planning Steering Committee will develop, pilot, and initiate the implementation of a planning methodology for determining the optimum size, scope, composition, and distribution of primary health-care and emergency services in Nova Scotia. The goals of service integration, system sustainability, and evidence-based decision making will guide the development and application of the methodology.

Enhanced Home Visiting Program

- The Early Childhood Development Strategy in Nova Scotia has three priority goal areas:
  - establishment of a comprehensive (Public Health) home visiting program
  - stabilization and enhancement of the current child care system
  - development of a coordinated system of early childhood development
- Healthy beginnings is a home visiting program in which public health nurses contact the families of the 10,000 babies born in Nova Scotia annually. The expanded program includes enhanced identification and assessment of families post-natally, universal screening at birth, in-depth assessment of families identified as potentially "at risk," and intensive home visiting for families requiring additional support. In 2003–04 public health nurses and trained community members will begin to provide these services.

Blood-Borne Pathogens

- Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), hepatitis B virus (HB), and hepatitis C virus (HCF) are preventable diseases that have major health and social impacts on individuals, families, and communities throughout the province. While treatment modalities are different for each of these diseases, prevention strategies (such as awareness, early identification, harm reduction practices such as needle exchange program, immunization, etc.) and social support activities (such as community support) are similar for all of them. The Blood Borne

Pathogens Project will facilitate a system of prevention and support services that address the needs and contribute to decreased prevalence and incidence of HIV, hepatitis B, hepatitis C, and other blood-borne pathogens.

2. Mental Health Services

Mental Health Strategic Directions

- In early 2003, the Department of Health released its strategic direction for mental health services and standards. During 2003–04 the Department of Health will work with teams of mental health-care providers and consumers to begin implementation of core service standards in key areas, such as community supports and crisis services. A plan for monitoring the quality, appropriateness, and effectiveness of mental health services will be developed. The standards address appropriate numbers of and qualifications for staff, timely access to emergency care and treatment, and follow-up with patients after a hospital discharge.

Child and Youth Mental Health Initiatives

- Two new mental health community-based treatment teams are being developed to serve children and youth who require this level of intensive service. The teams will be located at the Cape Breton DHA and at the IWK Health Centre. Addressing a long-standing gap in mental health services, they are a step up from outpatient treatment and a step down from inpatient services. Consultation with the new community-based treatment teams will be facilitated through the increased use of telehealth technology.
- A new 12-bed residential rehabilitation treatment centre will open in Halifax in 2003. It will provide professional care and security that previously could be provided only outside Nova Scotia for most children. This centre will be available to those who require medium- to longer-term care.

Youth Criminal Justice Act

- The proclamation of the new federal Youth Criminal Justice Act has impacts for mental health services in Nova Scotia. A clinical mental health team at the Nova Scotia Youth Centre has access to the resources of the IWK mental health program and will be available to the rest of the province via telehealth services at DHA sites.

3. Acute and Tertiary Care

Osteoporosis Education and Treatment Guidelines

- Health system stakeholders are involved in action planning for the recommendations made in the Report of the Provincial Osteoporosis Committee completed in 2002. Two new DEXA (dual energy x-ray absorptiometry) machines, used for diagnosing osteoporosis, will become fully operational in 2003–04. These are located in Sydney and Yarmouth. The quality assurance program required to operate the machines at a consistent and recognized level of quality across the province will be developed and implemented. As well, comprehensive education about treatment considered best practice and the appropriate use of the DEXA technology (commonly termed bone densitometry) will be provided to health-care professionals across Nova Scotia.

MRI Access and Utilization

- Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scanners are used to detect and diagnose soft-tissue problems in the brain, spinal cord, heart, major blood vessels, and musculoskeletal system. Health system stakeholders will be involved in developing protocols to ensure that all Nova Scotians have reasonable access to publicly funded MRI scanners. These protocols will facilitate health service providers in making, transferring, receiving, and processing requests for testing in an efficient manner. Nova Scotia currently has three publicly funded MRI scanners. One new scanner was acquired for the IWK Health Centre in 2002–03, and another is funded for Cape Breton. When all four units are fully operational, Nova Scotia's number of publicly funded MRI scanners will have increased significantly from 2001.

Provincial Approach to Cardiac Health

- Cardiovascular disease is one of the most common causes of death in Nova Scotia. It contributes directly to disability, work loss, and premature death. Building on the success of ICONS (Improving Cardiovascular Outcomes in Nova Scotia), the Department of Health is working with a broad range of stakeholders from across the province to develop a coordinated approach to the planning and delivery of cardiac services across the province.

Enhanced Cardiac Care

- The Department of Health will provide additional funding to enhance cardiac care in Nova Scotia. The funding will support the Capital District Health Authority's plan to add equipment, staff, and other resources to give patients faster access to cardiac tests and surgeries. This investment will benefit patients in all parts of the province who use cardiac facilities in the Capital District.

Wait List Strategy

- Reliable and comparable information on wait lists and wait times is essential to good health-care planning, service delivery, and public accountability. The Department of Health is working with health providers and administrative staff from across the province to develop a coordinated and consistent approach to data collection and measurement, which can be used to shorten wait lists, eliminate backlogs, and identify priority equipment needs.

Tissue and Organ Donation

- Nova Scotia is one of only two Canadian provinces without a comprehensive approach to tissue and organ donations. Evidence from other jurisdictions suggests that donation rates and health outcomes can be improved through better coordination and management of donation, retrieval, and utilization.

Acadian and Francophone Access to French Language Health Services

- Following a recent report on the availability of French-language health services in Nova Scotia, the Department of Health, working with the Office of Acadian Affairs, is developing a plan to improve access to French-language health services for the approximately 37,000 Nova Scotians whose first language is French.

Hospital Renovations

- Some recent projects include a new hospital in Amherst, major renovations to Yarmouth Regional Hospital, an expansion of the Dartmouth emergency room, and renovations to the Middleton Hospital to facilitate its new role. Decisions on future projects will be based on consultation with the district health authorities and the priorities of the Department of Health.

4. Insured Health Programs

Multi-Year Funding for Front-line Health Care

- Beginning in 2003–04, the Department of Health will increase funding for hospitals and other services provided by the District Health Authorities by at least 7 per cent per year. This will add almost $124 million over the next three years to support front-line health care, in addition to funding already provided for salaries and negotiated salary increases. The funding will enable the districts to plan more effectively to hire doctors, nurses, and health professionals for hospitals and clinics.

Atlantic Common Drug Review

- The Atlantic Expert Advisory Committee has made recommendations on 50 new drugs since January 2002. Nova Scotia actively participates in the project and has accepted all of the process's recommendations to date. The Atlantic Common Drug review process will continue during 2003–04.

Academic Drug Detailing

- Academic drug detailing provides continuing education for doctors on the most effective and appropriate use of drugs. Current efforts will be directed to new applications and extended into 2003–04.

Affordable Drugs

- The Department of Health is committed to keep drugs affordable for the 95,000 seniors insured through the provincial Pharmacare program. In 2003, a significant investment will freeze the premium and co-pay at current levels. Also, seniors will no longer pay more than $30 toward the cost of an individual prescription.

Physician Alternate Funding

- Physician alternate funding provides an alternative to the traditional fee-for-service approach to physician remuneration. Negotiation of alternative funding arrangements with academic components in the Capital DHA and IWK Health Centre is nearing completion. In collaboration with Dalhousie University, the department is working with physicians in designated specialties and situations to ensure effective service delivery and efficient resource utilization through alternative funding arrangements.

Patient Safety

- Safety concerns within health-care systems are the focus of significant international attention. While advancing technology has afforded great improvements in our ability to prevent, diagnose, and treat disease, the increasingly complex nature of health care has also increased the likelihood of errors and failures. Although most health-care encounters are free of mishaps, perfection is not possible. To augment the considerable emphasis placed on safety by our health-care provider organizations and professionals, unified national and provincial efforts to minimize unplanned and undesired harmful occurrences are warranted.

  Within its overall framework for quality, the Department of Health will identify priority action on issues of patient safety and continue to participate in national action planning.

5. Emergency Health Services

EHS Legislation

- A major priority for EHS in 2003–04 is the establishment of a legislative framework for all aspects of emergency health services delivery in Nova Scotia

6. Continuing Care Services

Consultation on Seniors Services

- In 2003–04 the Department of Health will consult on the options and services available to seniors, how they can most effectively be delivered, and what regulations are appropriate to protect seniors. This work will guide decisions on growth and delivery of services for seniors, as well as lead to changes in the Homes for Special Care Act.

Single Entry Access to Continuing Care Services

- In 2000, the Department of Health began coordinating the wait list for nursing-home and residential-care beds through the Single Entry Access initiative. Building on the single-entry access management information system, decision support capability will be further developed to assist in ongoing planning and monitoring of continuing care services to clients.

Challenging Behaviors in Continuing Care Setting

- Some residents of long-term care facilities suffer from dementias and other diseases that can give rise to challenging behavioural issues. They can hurt themselves or may hurt people around them. A complete review and assessment of the Challenging Behaviour Working Group Report and accompanying stakeholder input will be undertaken and program enhancements begun during 2003–04.

Health Services Planning (Phase II)

- The evidence-based methodology for determining the optimum size, scope, and distribution of continuing care services across Nova Scotia will be finalized.

Long-term Care System Management

- The Department of Health will continue development of a multi-faceted approach to matching resources in nursing homes to the needs of residents. This will include the continuation of all additional exemptions approved by Government in November 2002 for financial assessments. In 2003–04 the Department of Health will take the next steps in a multi-year plan to reduce the daily rate that some seniors now pay in nursing homes.

Palliative Care

- A provincial steering committee and several working groups have been established to develop a provincial approach to delivering palliative care services to Nova Scotians. A service delivery model based on national standards and previous work in rural palliative home care will be developed during 2003–04. Implementation will involve collaboration amongst DHA-based palliative care providers, family physicians, and continuing care providers.

7. Health Information Management

Health Information Policy and Privacy

- Canada Health Infoway is partnering with the Nova Scotia Department of Health to develop a "privacy toolkit" for use in the development of electronic health records across Canada. Nova Scotia is developing a health information privacy framework for use in hospitals and other health service delivery venues.

Electronic Health Records

- The importance of strategic investment in the development and implementation of the electronic health record (EHR) has been recognized in both the Romanow and Kirby reports and in the first ministers' Health Accord.

- A comprehensive hospital information system will enable the health records of Nova Scotians to travel with them wherever they access hospital-based care in the province. The Nova Scotia Hospital Information System (NShIS) will implement clinical information systems across the province to enable health-care providers to access the information they need to provide quality health care. Following the system's implementation in the Guysborough Antigonish Strait Health Authority, the system will be expanded to Cape Breton during 2003–04. It is expected to be available province-wide by the end of 2005.

Health System Performance Measurement

- Accountability is an important part of the Health Accord that Nova Scotia fully supports. Among other accountability and progress reports on the department's Web site, Nova Scotia participated in a nation-wide reporting project that resulted in the publication in 2002 of "Reporting to Nova Scotians on Comparable Health and Health System Indicators" (www.gov.ns.ca/health/pirc/). The Department of Health will undertake to produce more-focused reports in the near future.

In collaboration with health system stakeholders, the department will develop a more detailed and Nova Scotia–specific health indicators report for publication in 2003. Among other things, the report will include information on wait times for several key health services.

8. Health Human Resources

- Both the Romanow and Kirby reports highlighted health human resources as one of the biggest challenges facing the Canadian health system. Nova Scotia places a high priority on health human resource planning initiatives in areas of recruitment, retention, and retraining of health-care professionals.

Nursing Strategy and Enrolment Increase

- The Nursing Strategy includes intiatives to support recruitment, retention, and renewal of the nursing workforce in Nova Scotia. A continued focus on orientation, continuing and specialty education, enhanced recruitment efforts, and appropriate workforce utilization will help address the major challenges for nursing.

- In 1999, the government began funding an additional 75 nursing seats each year. As a result, 187 nurses will graduate in 2003, more than double the number in 1998. Another 50 to 60 seats will be added in 2003–04, half in the joint program at St. Francis Xavier University and the University College of Cape Breton, and half in the new accelerated nursing program at St. Francis Xavier. St. FX will also begin a bridging program to allow licensed practical nurses to become registered nurses more quickly.

Medical Laboratory Technologists

- Nova Scotia needs more medical laboratory technologists. In 2003–04, Nova Scotia will purchase additional seats in the program offered through the New Brunswick Community College system and will offer these Nova Scotian students bursaries of $4,000 in each year of the two-year program of studies. Other options for meeting this need will be identified and explored during 2003–04.

Medical School Enrolment Increase

- Eight new seats will be added to the first-year class at Dalhousie Medical School in 2003–04, raising the class size from 82 to 90. The Department of Health is working closely with the Faculty of Medicine at Dalhousie University to develop a long-term plan for continued enrolment growth in accordance with the needs of Nova Scotians.

Physician Resource Planning

- Nova Scotia's Physician Resource Planning Steering Committee has completed the development of a methodologically robust and flexible approach to physician service planning across the province. Consultations on the approach and application will be carried out during 2003–04, resulting in the implementation of a provincial physician resource plan.

Justice

Mission

The Department of Justice is committed to the fair and effective administration of justice and to excellence in service to the people of Nova Scotia.

Strategic Goals

The strategic goals of the Department of Justice are:

- Improve public safety and security.
- Reduce the harmful impact of crime on victims.
- Improve access to justice.
- Promote the lawful administration of public affairs.

The strategic goals of Justice are intended to advance the Justice Vision Statement and the government's priorities.

Improving public safety and security, and reducing the harmful impact of crime on victims, will help to reduce the demand for health services. A safe Nova Scotia will help stimulate the economy, as people prefer to do business and live in a place where they feel safe. The lawful administration of public affairs provides a healthy environment that will encourage economic growth and prosperity. To be successful in reaching its goals the department provides numerous staff training opportunities, promoting a lifelong learning environment in the justice system.

Nova Scotia is seen to be a place where people and their rights are respected. Justice will provide leadership in partnership with others to build a province where:

- Citizens trust the justice system.
- People are and feel safe and secure.
- Disputes are effectively and sensitively resolved.
- Access to Justice processes are timely and affordable.
- Communities actively participate in the justice system.
- Diversity is valued and respected.

Achievement of the Justice vision and strategic goals promotes Nova Scotia as "the" safe community in which to live and grow.

Core Business Areas

1. Oversight, Governance and Advice to Police and Private Security Services

The Department of Justice improves public safety and security by:

- providing an advisory róle to all police services and managing contracts with the RCMP and First Nations policing
- providing regular audits/inspections of municipal police agencies
- delivering the federal firearms program
- licensing companies and individuals engaged in the private security industry
- working with communities to develop and implement crime prevention programs

2. Provision of Assistance to Victims of Crime

The department reduces the harmful impact of crime on victims by:

- working with justice partners and the community to develop and implement policies and programs for victims of crime that address their needs
- providing direct services to victims through four core programs: the Regional Victim Services Program, the Criminal Injuries Counselling Program, the Victim Impact Statement Program, and the Child Victim Witness Program

3. Principled Dispute Resolution Mechanisms

The department improves public safety and security and improves access to justice by

- administering the following courts: Nova Scotia Court of Appeal, Supreme Court of Nova Scotia, General and Family Divisions, Provincial Court, Family Court, Small Claims Court, and Summary Proceedings Court
- managing programs in support of the Family Division, including conciliation, mediation, parent education, and supervised access
- providing security and transportation of prisoners to and from court
- providing administrative support to the Justices of the Peace
- managing the Maintenance Enforcement Program
- managing the Restorative Justice Program

4. Correction Services

The department improves public safety and security by:

- administering and operating five correctional institutions, two young offender facilities, and 16 community corrections offices

5. Legal Services to Government

The department promotes the lawful administration of public affairs by

- providing legal advice and representation to all government departments and agencies

6. The Proper Administration of Justice in the Province in Partnership with Others

The department improves public safety and security and promotes the lawful administration of public affairs by

- providing legal representation to qualified applicants, with priority for matters involving the liberty and civil rights of individual clients and for matters involving the integrity and protection of an individual's family through the Nova Scotia Legal Aid Commission
- conducting, through the Office of the Medical Examiner, investigations into all deaths due to violence, undue means, culpable negligence and sudden unexplained deaths; and providing documentation including cause and manner of death
- providing trustee services for incompetent adults/infants and missing persons through the Office of the Public Trustee
- coordinating administration of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

Priorities for 2003–2004

In 2003–04 the Department of Justice will continue to strive for service excellence, focussng upon five critical areas:

- Implementation of the new Youth Criminal Justice Act.
- Increased funding for legal aid.
- Enhanced information management systems within the justice enterprise.
- Improved Justice facilities with the construction of a new courthouse in Port Hawkesbury and a new correctional facility in Yarmouth.
- Improved access to the family justice system.

1. Oversight, Governance and Advice to Police and Private Security Services

- Continue to develop a framework for the delivery of adequate, effective, and efficient police services by:
  - strengthening the current police governance model in the province and enhancing the skills and abilities of the bodies that are responsible for police governance
  - working with the Justice Learning Centre (JLC) to coordinate police training
  - continuing the review of and consultative process regarding the Police Act and Regulations with the intent that amendments be tabled in the House of Assembly in 2003
  - working with the Halifax Regional Municipality in responding to the recommendations of the Policing Services Study that relate to areas of provincial jurisdiction
  - ensuring that the policing needs of the First Nations in Nova Scotia are adequately addressed and that the federal government pays its appropriate portion
  - participating in the coordination of efforts to respond to and manage threats to public safety arising as a result of terrorism and organized crime.
- Develop a framework for the delivery and governance of private security in Nova Scotia.

2. Provision of Assistance to Victims of Crime

- Implement a case coordination process in high-risk domestic violence cases.
- Evaluate the implementation of the action plan to improve the experience of child victims in the criminal justice system and make appropriate modifications.

3. Principled Dispute Resolution Mechanisms

- Continue to improve access to the family justice system by
  - improving speed of access to the Supreme Court (Family Division)
  - developing best scheduling practices in preparation for the development of an automated system

  - resubmitting a proposal to the federal government to expand the Family Division province-wide.
- Enhance the effectiveness, efficiency of, and access to courts by:
  - assessing the impact of alternatives to the formal court system
  - assisting and educating self-representing litigants;
  - examining the implementation of other technological aids
  - assessing the viability of video-conferencing
  - addressing the requirement to improve courthouse facilities in Nova Scotia through the construction of a new courthouse at Port Hawkesbury and renovations to other courthouses throughout the province.
- Implement court-related programs and services to meet the requirements of the *Youth Criminal Justice Act,* including the establishment of a youth court in Provincial Court province-wide.

4. Correction Services

- Continue to enhance the network of safe, secure correctional facilities through the establishment and construction of a new correctional institution in Yarmouth.
- Continue to implement a plan to provide programs and services required to comply with the Youth Criminal Justice Act, including implementation of an intensive support and supervision strategy (ISS) and intensive rehabilitative custody and supervision (IRCS) sentence of the courts.
- Undertake a broad review of the Corrections Act with a view to modernizing the legislation in the fall of 2003.
- Work with the Public Service Commission to undertake an employment equity review of Correctional Services.

5. Legal Services to Government

- Ensure the best value for government expenditure by
  - continuing and enhancing our capacity to do government's legal work in an efficient, effective, and professional manner

- ensuring that legal services engaged through the private sector are retained in accordance with the Acquisition of Private Legal Services Policy and the Employment Equity for Crown Law Agents Policy.

6. The Proper Administration of Justice in the Province in Partnership with Others

- Implement the new Justice Enterprise Information Network to facilitate the exchange of information among justice partners and to assist in meeting the requirements and objectives of Youth Criminal Justice Act.
- Better monitoring of sex offenders in Nova Scotia by supporting the federal government in implementing a national sex offender registry.
- Support the work of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPOP) Review Committee and respond to recommendations of the committee.
- Improve public safety by examining, in partnership with the Department of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations, a program that will increase highway safety and consequently reduce the strain on health care by:
  - studying the Drug Recognition Expert Program for possible implementation by the Provincial Police Service
  - establishing a partnership with the Provincial Police Service and motor vehicle compliance officers to enhance highway safety
  - undertaking a legislative review with the intent of strengthening provincial laws in relation to highway safety.
- Deliver approved curricula of the Justice Learning Centre, in collaboration with the Nova Scotia Community College.
- Enhance legal aid services for youth and maintain other legal aid services in the face of eroding federal contributions.

Natural Resources

Mission

To build a better future for Nova Scotians through responsible natural resources management.

Strategic Goals

Five broad goals were identified as part of a strategic plan prepared for the department in the mid-1990s. Since then, the goals have been adjusted slightly to better align them with the government's overall goals. The department's goals are:

- to achieve sound natural resources stewardship
- to conserve the diversity of Nova Scotia's natural environment
- to support Nova Scotia's economy through the sustainable development of natural resources
- to improve the quality of life in Nova Scotia
- to manage the department's financial, physical, human, and information resources effectively and efficiently.

The department supports government's priorities. Our activities contribute to growth in the provincial economy, one of the government's key priorities for 2003–04, through the responsible development and use of natural resources.

Natural resources provide significant economic, social, cultural, and environmental benefits to Nova Scotians; and the best available scientific knowledge must be used for their sound management. The department's aim is to maintain an appropriate balance so that resource use continues to provide a substantial contribution to the provincial economy (and especially our rural economy), while being carried out in a socially responsible and sustainable manner. Our natural resources are one of the province's features that make it an attractive place in which to live, visit, and do business. In addition, revenue generated from the resource sector (both directly and indirectly) helps to fund our health and education systems and other important public services.

Core Business Areas

The department's activities can be allocated to one of the following core business areas:

- Natural Resources Management
- Crown Lands Administration
- Infrastructure and Support Services.

DNR manages natural resources on an integrated basis. In keeping with this integrated approach to the management of the natural resources falling in the department's areas of responsibility, individual resource sectors are not categorized as separate core business areas.

1. Natural Resources Management

Natural Resources Management covers the department's broad responsibilities relative to the development, management, conservation, use, and protection of forest, mineral, park and wildlife resources.

Forestry-related responsibilities, on both Crown and private lands, include forest management planning and research, developing and implementing strategies to ensure sustainable forests, maintaining the provincial forest inventory, producing data on the province's forest resources, monitoring primary forest production, and coordinating extension programs and support for industry development. On private lands, the department leverages expenditures on silvicultural activities by providing a portion of the funding. DNR also provides technical and professional assistance and information, supports construction of forest access roads, and monitors for compliance with regulatory requirements related to forest harvesting and forest management. On Crown lands, the department administers the licensing of land for timber and other resource uses. Funding is provided to invest in silviculture in order to ensure forest sustainability, and a network of access roads on Crown lands is maintained. Protection-related responsibilities include the development and operation of programs designed to protect Nova Scotia's forests from fire, insects, and disease and to protect special sites and significant wildlife habitats.

Mineral responsibilities include the implementation of policies and programs dealing with exploration, development, management, and utilization of mineral resources. The department develops and implements strategies to support and promote the mineral resource sector, maintains the provincial geoscientific database and inventory of mineral resources, monitors mineral production and monitors for compliance with regulatory requirements, administers mineral royalties and the provincial mineral rights tenure system, coordinates interdepartmental regulatory review of mineral development projects, and provides professional assistance and advice with respect to mineral resources and provincial geology. Geological studies, undertaken to document and understand the province's geology, help to document the province's mineral endowment and define the potential for new mineral resources. These programs also provide needed information to support sound public policy decisions in areas such as mineral resource development, environmental protection, land use, and public health and safety

Park responsibilities include the planning, design, development, and operation of over 120 camping and day-use parks, natural area parks, and park reserves, in addition to supporting facilities on crown lands, various trails, and other outdoor recreational opportunities and, through partnerships with community groups, on private lands. Parks and recreation programs and services provide quality recreational experiences to Nova Scotians and visitors to the province, while ensuring environmental, heritage and resource protection.

Wildlife responsibilities include research, development, and delivery of programs, policies, and legislation for the management and conservation of the province's wildlife resources and their habitats, including endangered species initiatives. Information on wildlife populations and their habitat is collected in order to obtain the scientific information required for sound decision making. This also includes the provision of educational and viewing opportunities at the provincial wildlife park in Shubenacadie.

Enforcement responsibilities include the development, coordination, and operation of a departmental resource law enforcement and compliance program, which also provides enforcement . services to the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, the protected areas program within the Department of Environment and Labour, and the Canadian Wildlife Service.

2. Crown Lands Administration

This core business area covers the department's activities related to the administration of the province's Crown lands. Crown Lands Administration encompasses the acquisition, leasing and disposal of interests in Crown lands; coordination of government surveying requirements; carrying out Crown lands boundary line maintenance; and maintenance of provincial Crown lands records and the Crown lands GIS cadastral database.

Nova Scotia's land mass is approximately 5.2 million hectares (13 million acres), of which about 1.4 million hectares (3.5 million acres) are administered and controlled by the Department of Natural Resources as provincial Crown lands. (Some other departments, such as Transportation and Public Works, also administer land holdings, such as highways and land with provincial government buildings). The department is also responsible for submerged lands, both inland and along the province's 9000 km of coastline. Approximately 20 land-related statutes are administered by the department. As well, the department provides land-related services, such as land administration and designations, to other departments and undertakes activities in partnership with nongovernment conservation-oriented organizations aimed at securing ecologically significant lands.

3. Infrastructure and Support Services

Infrastructure responsibilities include the maintenance and replacement of a fleet of approximately 700 highway and other specialized vehicles (such as fire trucks, snowmobiles, ATVs, and tractors), as well the operation, maintenance, and replacement of five helicopters. The road vehicles are heavily used in every aspect of the department's program delivery, such as fire suppression and enforcement, and provide a range of capabilities from personal transport to heavy equipment operations. The helicopters are used for forest fire detection and suppression, ground search and rescue, natural resource management, and transportation of government personnel. The DNR fleet (particularly helicopters) play an important role in the province's emergency preparedness planning. Department facilities range from offices and depots, to pole barns, aircraft hangars, and fire towers.

Central support services include human resources, information technology, financial services, communications, legal services, planning, asset management, risk management, records management, office administration, library services, and the Office of the Minister and Deputy Minister. As the host department for the Resources Corporate Services Unit, financial services, human resources, and information technology are provided to the Departments of Agriculture and Fisheries, Environment and Labour, and Energy and to a number of agencies. Several other departments and agencies also receive certain services from the Resources Corporate Services Unit.

Priorities for 2003–2004

The following are the main priorities that have been identified for the Department of Natural Resources for 2003–04. Priorities are grouped within the core business areas previously identified. These priorities are above and beyond the department's regular ongoing operations.

1. Natural Resources Management

Priorities for this core business area are primarily related to the department's ongoing responsibility for sound natural resource stewardship.

Implementation of the Forest Strategy

The Forest Strategy consists of nine major policy, program, and regulatory elements, which were to be implemented over five years. Its focus is the achievement of sustainable forestry and forest use in the province. In 1998, changes were made to the Forests Act to support sustainable forestry and to provide the authority needed to begin to implement the Forest Strategy. The focus for 2003–04 will be to complete the implementation phase of the strategy. Most regulatory, policy, and program elements are now in place. Specific priorities listed below relate to completing the remaining two elements: revising aspects of previously implemented elements and monitoring compliance.

- Emphasis will be placed on completion of the Code of Forest Practice. The Code of Forest Practice framework document will be made available for public review and comment. Following the review and receipt of comments, guidelines and technical manuals will be developed. The Code of Forest Practice, when complete, will provide a framework for planning and conducting forest management operations.
- The first State of Forests report will be prepared and released. This report will provide the forestry industry and the general public with up-to-date information on the condition of Nova Scotia's forests.
- The final steps in the development and testing of enhancements to the Wood Buyers Registry database, designed to incorporate the wood acquisition plan component, will be undertaken. Further emphasis will be placed on enhancing the support programs and processes within our forest inventory geographic information system to manage forest harvest monitoring and silviculture information submitted to the department.

- The department is committed to regular monitoring and review of the Forest Strategy components and to making adjustments that improve the effectiveness of individual elements and of the overall forest strategy. In this context, revisions are being proposed to both the Registration and Statistical Returns Regulations and the Forest Sustainability Regulations.
- The department will emphasize regular client liaison to identify issues and define solutions. The Forest Technical Advisory Committee is the mechanism for representing the views of different stakeholder groups during the implementation of the Forest Strategy.
- The effectiveness of the Forest Strategy will be further enhanced through systematic compliance monitoring and enforcement actions.

Support for the Mineral Industry and Other Geoscience Information Users

The department provides programs, services, and information that are utilized by the province's mineral industry and by a number of other groups and the public. Departmental priorities for 2003–04 are as follows:

- Department staff will work to provide for a continuing coal industry in Cape Breton by addressing the reissuing of coal leases following their surrender by the Cape Breton Development Corporation (CBDC). Staff will have discussions with officials of CBDC and the federal government in an attempt to ensure that provincial requirements under the Mineral Resources Act for remediation and reclamation of CBDC lands disturbed by coal mining in the Sydney coalfield are properly planned and initiated.
- It is anticipated that the amendments to the Mineral Resources Act and regulations will be proclaimed. Following proclamation, the department will begin a thorough review of the legislative framework for mineral exploration and development in the province with the objective of making significant revisions to the Mineral Resources Act and improving the management and administration of all mineral resource commodities in the province.

- In co-operation with the Office of Economic Development, the department will initiate a process to develop a mineral development strategy, including a review of the province's mineral policy and development of an action plan to ensure that the department's programs are focused on supporting and encouraging economic development related to the use of geological resources. The department will continue to facilitate efficient and effective reviews of mineral development projects through a coordinated "one- window" process, including the provision of scientific, technical, and policy advice to other departments.
- The current five-year strategic plan for geoscience is coming to an end, and a new strategic planning exercise will be undertaken to determine program priorities for the next five years. The department will continue to aggressively seek partnerships with outside agencies including the federal government to optimize provincial resources for geoscience programming.
- The department maintains a library of drill core and geological specimens at its Drill Core Library facility in Stellarton. Budgetary cutbacks require implementation of an alternative service delivery at the facility that is commensurate with available resources. A plan for long-term service delivery at the core library will be completed and implemented during 2003–04.

Integrated Resource Management Planning on Crown Lands

The department defines integrated resource management (IRM) as "a planning and decision-making process that involves the coordination of resource management policies, programs, and activities so that long-term sustainable benefits are optimized and conflicts among resource users are minimized." An IRM process is used for Crown lands administered by DNR so that we are able to take into account the relationships between the various resource uses and the effects of management practices of one resource upon others.

The IRM process includes two major parts. First, the planning activity identifies special land features, uses, and resource values and incorporates these into databases, goals, and objectives for Crown land. An inventory of values has been identified by department staff, other departments and agencies, the general public, and stakeholders. Second, based on the planning information identified, the land-use decision-making part of the process recognizes and conserves special land features and uses, optimizes long-term sustainable resource values, and minimizes conflicts.

The province is categorized into 39 ecodistricts. (Sable Island has been added as a separate ecodistrict so the number of ecodistricts has increased by one from the 38 ecodistricts reported in our 2002–03 Business Plan.) Eventually, each ecodistrict will be covered by a Long-Range Management Framework (LRMF), an ecologically based land-use planning document. Work planned for 2003–04 includes the following:

- Ecological management guidelines will be developed to provide the basis for the LRMFs.
- A pilot project under way for the Mulgrave Plateau ecodistrict will be completed. A draft LRMF for this ecodistrict will be produced using guidelines developed by the department that cover the process to be used when preparing an LRMF.
- After the draft LRMF for the pilot project has been completed, the guidelines will be assessed.
- The next ecodistricts to have LRMFs prepared will be identified.

Provide An Effective Parks and Recreation Program

The department supports the planning, design, development, and operation of more than 120 camping and day-use parks, in addition to providing trails and other outdoor recreational opportunities on Crown land. During the fiscal year a number of initiatives and activities are planned.

- The Operational Standards and Guidelines will be reviewed and updated to reflect current facility and infrastructure management requirements. This document is utilized in the day-to-day operations and maintenance of provincial parks.
- Securing additional resources for the long-term use and public access is an important aspect of park development. The department will identify park and outdoor recreation opportunities that become available and that support program objectives, including outdoor recreation experiences and the protection of unique and desirable cultural and heritage values.

- Part of the park development process involves preparing individual management plans for properties before any significant on-site development takes place. Management plans provide the context for future development by establishing the opportunities and constraints that exist. For 2003–04, management plans are expected to be completed for several properties, including Crystal Crescent, Cole Harbour Heritage Park, Second Lake, West Mabou, and Maitland. The development of management plans for several other properties, including Cape Split and Long Lake, will continue during the year, but are not expected to be completed.

- Partnerships are a key aspect of furthering community involvement and commitment to park development and are another avenue in securing the long-term sustainability of parks. A number of partnerships are in place. During 2003–04 the department will maintain our existing partnerships and provide various park services in co-operation with these partners. As management plans for individual properties are completed, new partnership agreements will be reached with community groups for Crystal Crescent and the Cole Harbour Heritage Park.

  A key property for future partnerships and development opportunities is McNabs and Lawlor Islands Provincial Park located in the centre of Halifax Harbour. The department will also work with other government departments to address cross-jurisdictional mandates.

- The department will work with the Halifax Regional Municipality and the Shubenacadie Canal Commission to manage public areas and access points along the Shubenacadie Canal. A long range plan to secure infrastructure maintenance and development will be prepared in co-operation with the Shubenacadie Canal Commission. The department will assist the Shubenacadie Canal Commission in their efforts to identify and secure new partnerships in support of their mandate.

Conserve Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat

The promotion and implementation of the principles and ethics of conservation and sustainable use of wildlife populations, habitats, and ecosystems in Nova Scotia are priorities of the department. This includes research, development, and delivery of programs, policies, and legislation, including species-at-risk initiatives.

Information on wildlife populations and their habitat is collected in order to obtain the scientific information required for sound decision making. Also included is the provision of educational and viewing opportunities at the provincial wildlife park in Shubenacadie. Specific priorities are listed below.

- The department will support the implementation of the National Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk, the Nova Scotia Endangered Species Act and the federal Species at Risk Act. This will be done, in part, by evaluating the status of species, listing new species as necessary, initiating recovery plans for any listed species, and engaging in recovery actions.
- Monitoring and regulation of harvested wildlife populations, such as deer, moose, and small game, and working co-operatively at provincial, national, and international levels will help to ensure conservation and sustainable use.
- The department will work with partners in projects such as the Eastern Habitat Joint Venture, the Black Duck Joint Venture, and the Sea Duck Joint Venture as part of Nova Scotia's commitment to wetland and waterfowl conservation under the North American Waterfowl Management Plan.
- DNR will manage the Habitat Conservation Fund and the Species at Risk Conservation Fund. These provide funding for non-government organizations to undertake important wildlife conservation projects. Projects that qualify for funding will be chosen during the year.

Utilize Department Information and Expertise

The department has a considerable amount of scientific and technical information available. Several department priorities for 2003–04 relate to our use of this natural resources–related knowledge and information, as well as activities aimed at making it easier for others to access and use our information.

- The availability and utility of digitally based geoscientific information on the Web will be improved during the year. The department will also work with municipalities, community groups, rural development authorities, and others to increase their use of geoscientific and mineral resource information in land- and resource-use decision making.
- Improvement of public safety will be addressed by continuing the program to cap and/or fill abandoned mine openings on Crown lands. As part of this program, the department will provide information and advice on abandoned mines to private land owners and municipalities. Remediation of high-risk abandoned mine openings on Crown lands will be undertaken, although the amount carried out will depend on the availability of funding and the complexity of the sites being remediated.
- Educational material will be provided to youth, educators, resource sector clients, the media, and the general public on sustainable and responsible resource management and use practices, department programs, and changes in legislative requirements.

Meet National Obligations

The department is working with the federal government and other provinces on a number of areas. Specific activities planned for 2003–04 include the following:

- The department is participating in the development of a National Forest Information System for Canada, which will be capable of making forest information from a wide range of sources available to the public. Nova Scotia places a priority on co-operating on the project and is developing the forest information necessary to contribute to a National Forest Inventory, which will be distributed through this information management system. All provinces have placed a priority on developing a new National Forest Strategy through a process involving extensive stakeholder participation.

- The department is a participant in a federal/provincial/territorial initiative to develop a Canadian Geoscience Knowledge Network. This initiative will make the information holdings of all Canadian government geoscience agencies available in compatible digital formats over the Internet. An initial version of a catalogue of data holdings of all participants will be released in 2003–04 and will include information about Nova Scotia's geoscience data holdings.
- The department is participating in the National Orphaned and Abandoned Mines Program. This program is a joint industry-government initiative to address the legacy of orphaned/abandoned mines in Canada with all the associated issues such as environmental liability, human health concerns, and the financial cost of clean-up. The department is developing information on orphaned/abandoned mine sites in Nova Scotia as part of a national inventory as a first step in this program.
- Nova Scotia is hosting the annual Energy and Mines Ministers Conference in September 2003. Planning for this conference is under way by a team of officials from DNR and the Department of Energy. As host of the conference, DNR has a number of responsibilities during this year, including chair of the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Mineral Industry, chair of the Committee of Provincial Geologists Committee, and chair of the Director of Mines committee.

Provide Forest Protection Services

Protection of Nova Scotia's forests from fire, pests, and disease is mandated through the Forests Act and is a continuing priority for the department. The extent of forest fires and pest occurrences in the province can vary considerably from year to year and can place a considerable burden on the department's budget. There is a need to restructure these programs to ensure that they address current and future requirements and are capable functioning effectively within budgetary limitations. Specific priorities are listed below:

- A review of the fire management program was initiated during 2002–03 and will continue into 2003–04. This review will ensure the most effective use of resources, update practices and procedures, and ensure that procedures and agreements are in place to work effectively with associated organizations.
- A similar program review will be completed for the integrated pest management program. A priority within this program will be the development of a pest risk assessment and management regime for Nova Scotia.

2. Crown Lands Administration

Priorities for this core business area are related to the administration of the province's Crown lands. These include updating several pieces of legislation, acquiring additional land, distributing land information, and meeting operational obligations and demands for service.

Provide an Up-to-Date and Responsive Legislative Framework

The effective administration of Crown land depends upon the existence of an up-to-date legislative and policy framework. Work planned for 2003–04 includes the following:

- A draft of a new Trails Act was prepared in the fall of 2002, which included a streamlined process for formal registration of community trails and limited liability for community trail operators. In co-operation with the Office of Health Promotion and the Nova Scotia Trails Federation, a consultation process will occur to obtain input from trail interests. A final draft is expected to be ready for possible consideration by the legislature in the fall of 2003.
- A review of the current Beaches Act and related policy issues is currently under way and will be completed during 2003–04, along with an examination of the legislative regimes being utilized in other jurisdictions. Options will be developed for consideration.

Improve Opportunities for Land Acquisition

In 2002–03, the department had a Tangible Capital Asset (TCA) allocation of $1 million to support acquisitions on behalf of the Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Environment and Labour. In addition, a special allocation of $5 million supported the acquisition of Cape Split. There is continued pressure to add other properties valued by Nova Scotians to the Crown land base. The following activities are planned for 2003–04.

- Subject to the availability of TCA funding, the department will acquire coastal lands, wilderness area inholdings for and the Department of Environment and Labour, and other properties that support department and government initiatives and programs. Partnerships with nongovernment conservation organizations (such as the Nature Conservancy of Canada), resulting in the leveraging of private-sector funds for land acquisition, will also be encouraged and supported.

Improve Access to Land Information

The department holds a considerable amount of land information. However, much of this information is paper-based, which limits its usefulness. The following activities are planned for 2003–04 in order to allow the improved utilization of Crown land information and to facilitate access by users of this information.

- Continued integration of Crown land information with the resource-specific geographic information system databases within the department and improving the availability of Crown land information remain a priority. Expanding the availability of this information internally within the department is being pursued. Work is also being carried out on the conversion of paper-based records to an electronic format.

- Planning for the migration of Crown lands into the new Land Registration system (Registry 2000) will be a priority. Department staff will work with Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations to develop a process and a schedule for the migration. Depending upon the agreed-upon process and timing, the process to make Crown grant information available via the Internet will be accelerated.

3. Infrastructure and Support Services

The department has a considerable investment in buildings, other facilities, and equipment necessary for its ongoing operations. The maintenance, and occasional replacement, of these facilities and equipment is an ongoing priority.

Infrastructure/Equipment Maintenance and Replacement

A number of projects have been identified as priorities for repairs or replacement during 2003–04. This includes activities related to various departmental offices, depots, park facilities, roads, parking lots, the Bell 212 helicopter, helicopter landing areas, and a range of other planned work.

Implement Planned Support Services Initiatives

Some specific projects are being implemented during the coming year. Major priorities planned for 2003–04 include the following.

- A new records management system will be implemented during the year. This system will enhance record management capabilities within the department by providing department staff outside Head Office with access to an electronic system.
- A network will be installed for the Coxheath office, which is the department's main office in the Eastern Region. This network will provide staff with a significant improvement in information technology capabilities, including much better access to information needed for the IRM Project.

Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations

Mission

To provide Nova Scotians with seamless, easy access to numerous government services in a cost- effective manner while maintaining the interests of the public and municipalities.

Strategic Goals

Of the 13 major areas of responsibility of the department, the following four strategic goals have been selected to promote government's priorities, address some of the crucial challenges and opportunities facing SNSMR, and fulfil major ongoing obligations. They represent areas where the department will dedicate additional emphasis, over and above its current level of operations. In particular, the department will emphasize improvements to its services to business as it sets specific work priorities for 2003–04.

- Improve accessibility and quality of government services.
- Improve the effectiveness, efficiency, and financial health of municipalities.
- Improve the standards for consumer protection, driver and vehicle safety, tax compliance, information holdings and security, and business practices in programs and services offered by the department.
- Emerge as an employer of choice, known for developing staff and providing a motivating work environment.

Core Business Areas

The department's five core businesses are consistent with its five divisions with the exception of administrative and support services, which have been removed from the discussion of the core businesses. The department is organized on a matrix basis, meaning that it is organized around the function being performed such as service delivery or program management rather than on a sectoral or client basis. The discussion below provides the major roles and functions (responsibilities) of each core business.

1. Program Management and Corporate Services

Program Management and Corporate Services has responsibility for most of the programs offered by the department. This includes strategic direction for the program, program development, enforcement, and public awareness. The division is also accountable for the related legislation, regulations, and policies necessary for each program and for human resource support.

Currently, major program areas and activities of this core business include the Provincial Tax Commission, the Registry of Motor Vehicles, the Registry of Joint Stock Companies, Residential Tenancies, collections for this department and on behalf of other departments of the government, Consumer and Business Policy, Driver and Vehicle Safety, Corporate Development, and Audit and Enforcement in several program areas.

Benefits of these programs include reduced deaths and injuries due to motor vehicle operations on provincial roads, a fairer and more efficient tax collection system, better consumer protection, more effective program management by the department, improved compliance by business with licensing requirements, optimized revenue collection by the department on behalf of government and other departments, and a healthier and safer workplace for department employees.

This core business fulfils the department's mission and goals 3 and 4 by constantly improving the programs administered by SNSMR in a manner that is consistent with the public interest.

2. Service Delivery

Service Delivery is responsible for delivering the programs and services offered by the department. It provides the majority of the direct interaction with customers on behalf of the department. It is also responsible for managing the department Call Centre, Access Nova Scotia and Registry of Motor Vehicle offices across the province, and the e-service channel.

Major programs delivered by this core business include the Registry of Motor Vehicles, Residential Tenancies, Debtor Assistance, and the Registry of Joint Stock Companies.

Benefits of the core business include easier access to an ever-expanding number of information and other services offered by the department on behalf of government. This is accomplished through either electronic or physical means, which provide more timely responses to service requests and better quality service in terms of accessibility of the information required.

This core business fulfils the department's mission and goal 1 by constantly striving to provide streamlined and easy access to quality, client-centred services.

3. Registry and Information Management Services

Registry and Information Management Services is responsible for registering and processing public records related to land, businesses, and individuals. It is also responsible for the geographic information holdings of the province and is the application and system owner of the department's major databases.

This division operates or provides operational support to a number of registries, including the Registry of Deeds, Personal Property Registry, Vital Statistics, the Registry of Joint Stock Companies, and the Nova Scotia Business Registry. It leads the province's strategy for geographic information management, including developing, maintaining, and distributing Nova Scotia's primary geographic information. Other major back-office activities include processing for a number of programs offered by the department such as fuel, tobacco, and vehicle dealer registrations, as well as support to programs offered by other departments including Wildlife Act licensing programs on behalf of the Department of Natural Resources and registrations on behalf of the Workers' Compensation Board.

Benefits from the operation of this core business include improved efficiency in the provision of registration and processing functions on behalf of departmental programs and external program owners, enhanced integrity and security around the information holdings of the department, improved quality of the data contained in the holdings, easier access to that information, and increased ability to share data with other government departments and agencies.

This core business contributes to the department's mission and goals 1 and 3 by continuously improving the registries and information holdings that support internal and external client services offered by SNSMR and by improving the security around those holdings.

4. Municipal Services

Municipal Services provides planning and advisory services related to municipal matters to the government and on behalf of the government to municipalities. The core business also operates many of the grant and other financial support programs offered to municipalities.

Programs within the division include advice and support to municipalities in the areas of administration and finance and land-use planning. The division also administers programs such as the Canada–Nova Scotia Infrastructure Program, the Community Accessibility Program, and the Community Transportation Assistance Program.

Benefits derived from this business unit include municipalities that are more effective in their governance role and their ability to provide services to citizens, are more financially viable, and are able to support development that will provide long-term benefits to the entire province.

This core business fulfils the department's mission and goal 2 by continuously improving advice, programs and other forms of assistance to promote municipal interests so that they may operate in a more effective and efficient manner.

5. Alternative Program Delivery

Alternative Program Delivery is responsible for developing partnerships to deliver services on behalf of other government departments and for managing arrangements with non-government agencies to deliver services on behalf of government.

APD is examining, in consultation with municipalities, other delivery models for the provincial assessment program. Until a final decision is taken, the APD Division also delivers the Assessment Services program on behalf of the department. Assessment Services is responsible for delivering an annual assessment roll to each of the 55 municipalities in compliance with the Assessment Act. The assessment roll is used by municipalities to generate revenue for services delivered by them; and the uniform assessment is used to calculate municipal contributions towards education, corrections and the distribution of provincial grants to municipalities. Legislation also requires assessment notices to be delivered annually to each property owner and to provide for an assessment appeal mechanism. The major activities in the assessment area include preparation of the annual assessment roll, a property inspection program, an appeal process, client relations, and technology support.

Opportunities for delivery of other government services by SNSMR include transferring certain licensing and permitting functions from the Department of Environment and Labour and on-line licence renewals with two departments, as well as partnerships with several municipalities.

Benefits of alternative program delivery include better-quality, cost-effective services being delivered to Nova Scotians and a more effective and efficient use of public resources. The Assessment Services section provides municipalities with a reliable and stable basis to generate revenue to fund the services required by the citizens of municipal units.

This core business contributes to the department's mission and goals 1, 2, and 3 by continuously seeking alternative service delivery and infrastructure solutions that improve service and provide it in a more cost-effective manner. Producing the assessment roll is integral to the interests of municipalities and their financial health.

Priorities for 2003–2004

1. Program Management and Corporate Services

The following priorities are intended to improve program standards in the areas of driver behaviour and vehicle safety and security around Internet purchases, enhance the level of compliance in several program areas, and reduce underground economic activity and illegal activities related to tobacco:

- Promote a number of regulatory and program initiatives to improve driver behaviour and vehicle safety, including new commercial carrier safety-rating and collision-reporting systems; implement measures to discourage impaired driving and expand helmet usage.
- Develop a number of legislative and regulatory initiatives in the consumer protection field, including proposals related to motor vehicle dealer licensing and consultations for possible updating and improvements related to funeral services and cemeteries.
- Improve tenant-landlord relations through a number of initiatives, including possible amendments to security deposit provisions under the Residential Tenancies Act, improving information available to landlords and tenants on their responsibilities, and encouraging the use of mediation for dispute resolution.

- Legislative and regulatory amendments are required to provide a better framework for the registration of businesses. This will include identifying amendments to the Business Electronic Filing Act to improve security and authentication requirements for e-government, and consideration of amendments to the Companies Act to address outdated requirements, and to the Co-operative Associations Act to deal with, among other things, issuance of preferred shares.
- To combat an expected increase in illegal activity associated with tobacco smuggling, the division will closely monitor wholesale shipments to and retail sales in Nova Scotia and will initiate audits on tobacco wholesalers in Canada. These efforts will also be coordinated with other provincial administrations as well as national organizations such as the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency and the RCMP in their efforts to reduce the amount of illegal tobacco trade.
- A long-term strategy is required to reduce the size of the underground economy, which will, in turn, increase the amount of taxes collected by the province and provide for a more level playing field for businesses that abide by the rules. In addition, discussions will begin with the Department of Education to address this matter through the high school curriculum.

2. Service Delivery

The following priorities are intended to improve the quality of service delivery by increasing the utilization of existing physical locations, improving staff training and expanding e-service options:

- Identify and develop services feasible for electronic service delivery. This includes on-line applications allowing for the ordering of personalized plates, the payment of outstanding fines, and the verification of liens registered to vehicles.
- Forecast and monitor customer demand and operational priorities and deploy staff appropriately to achieve service level standards.

- Lead the Website Improvement Project by chairing the Steering Committee. Identify opportunities to make improvements to the Web site governance model, design and branding, content management, and technical systems. The focus for this fiscal year will be implementing the SAP Portal System, allowing for enhanced navigation and presentation of the Web site.
- Service Delivery wishes to commence a review, in collaboration with the Registry and Information Management Services and Program Management and Corporate Services divisions, of business service and identify areas for improvement. The initial focus will be on preparing a scope definition for the initiative and identifying the phases of work to be completed. Once completed, the department will catalog current business services and analyse and define services feasible to be delivered through each service delivery channel (in-person, Internet, mail, IVR).

3. Registry and Information Management Services

The following priorities are intended to improve registration processes, to enhance quality, access, and security to the department's data and information holdings, and to enable sharing of data among other government departments and agencies:

- Expand implementation of the new land registration system, which guarantees ownership and provides electronic access to land information that is based on parcel location rather than people's names. The experiences gained through the initial implementation site in Colchester County will be reviewed and an implementation plan for province-wide roll-out will be developed. Several more counties will implement the system in 2003–04, providing improved electronic access to land information including municipal tax data, civic addresses and Crown land information.

- Expand the number of licences, permits, registrations and certifications that business can complete through the Nova Scotia Business Registry (NSBR). This involves developing the appropriate technical development capacity and back-office procedures to work with existing and new participating programs, such as the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency, the Workers' Compensation Board, the Department of Environment and Labour, who wish to use the NSBR infrastructure to streamline the licensing requirements of businesses in Nova Scotia. This will include a combination of automation and process improvements. A particular focus will be on the potential of the NSBR infrastructure to offer on-line licence renewal capabilities on behalf of other departments.
- Implement the first phase of the GeoNOVA portal, in partnership with other provincial departments, municipalities, and the federal government, to expand electronic access to geographic information to support program administration and decision making across all levels of government. This includes the implementation of appropriate standards, the provision of more Web-based access to geographic information such as the ability to order maps and air photos on line, and an expanded data warehouse for provincial department users to access geographic information directly.
- Participate in national initiatives to strengthen the security of Vital Statistics records and ensure electronic sharing of data among authorized agencies as part of national and international efforts to reduce the risk of identity theft. This initiative will depend on the availability of federal funding as no department funding is allocated to this priority.

4. Municipal Services

The following priorities are intended to provide high-quality advice and support to municipalities to assist them in becoming more effective and efficient in their operations, improve their financial viability, and encourage sustainable development:

- Promote the use of the performance indicator rating system within municipalities, encourage municipalities to share best practices among themselves, and work with municipalities to broaden the breadth and usefulness of the rating system. The system was developed in the past year in co-operation with all 55 municipalities.
- Continue to support the implementation of e-government services in municipalities, by establishing pilot projects in those communities that wish to lead the process and by sponsoring workshops on the development of basic and advanced sites. This initiative will further improve the efficiency and effectiveness of municipal operations, provide greater levels of service to the public, and maintain Nova Scotia's current position as one of the leading provinces in e-government.
- Build on the progress made in the previous year in support of sustainable development by: facilitating and supporting the implementation of new community-based inclusive transportation systems; support the completion of additional municipal drinking water supply protection plans in municipalities; and commit a further 20 per cent (to a total of 95 per cent committed) of funding under the Canada–Nova Scotia Infrastructure Program.
- The province will contribute $32 million to the Halifax Harbour Solutions Project, which includes two pieces of property in Dartmouth valued at $2 million. Payments in any year will be contingent on budgetary approval and expenditures made by HRM. The province will also be providing financial support to similar projects in Sydney, Lunenburg, and other locations in the future under the Canada–Nova Scotia Infrastructure Program.
- Promote the use of, and provide support for, intermunicipal partnerships as a means for municipalities to improve effectiveness and efficiency.

- Joint consultation with municipalities regarding provincial-municipal relations. The objective of this initiative is to develop a set of principles to guide provincial-municipal relations and to identify a series of concrete actions that might be taken to strengthen the relationship.
- The division will be devoting considerable effort in the coming year towards an initiative designed to make SAP the financial software platform of choice for municipalities.
- It is expected that the Municipal Elections Act will undergo extensive revision in the coming fiscal year.

5. Alternative Program Delivery

The following priorities will establish this business unit as government's lead in alternative program delivery. The priorities below support partnerships resulting in quality, cost-effective services to Nova Scotians and program improvements so that government resources are used effectively. They also provide for a high quality of assessment service characterized by a reliable and stable assessment roll for each of the 55 municipalities:

- Implement an Alternative Program Delivery marketing strategy to raise the level of awareness of the services available to client departments and engage them in partnerships for improved service.
- Lead several initiatives, in co-operation with other divisions and departments, to improve service to citizens and businesses, such as the following:
  - providing single-window access to provincial and federal government services related to death (the Bereavement/Compassion Project)
  - delivering more licences through the Nova Scotia Business Registry, including elevators and lifts licences for the Department of Environment and Labour and on-line licence renewals for other departments, within the next two years
  - evaluating a self-regulated industry organization for automobile dealer licensing by developing and advancing enabling legislation
  - working with several public service organizations within the Cape Breton Regional Municipality to identify opportunities to partner on common services and infrastructure.

- Enhance the transparency, fairness, and usefulness of assessment information by undertaking a number of initiatives that will allow municipal units, department staff, and the public to access assessment information, by enhancing Web-based technology, delivering the roll electronically to municipalities, implementing a Web-based call centre project, and evaluating service levels of the municipal units.

Human Resource Development—Employer of Choice

The department has identified the development of its human resources as an important priority. It wishes to become the employer of choice for current and prospective employees. This initiative is department-wide, in that it affects all the core businesses of the department and is supported by all the units of the department. It will be led in large part by the Human Resource unit in conjunction with the Public Service Commission (PSC). Due to the importance of this matter, the following priorities have been identified in 2003–04:

- Implement an enhanced performance management system across the department and review performance incentive options with the PSC.
- Continue supporting the PSC in completing the classification phase of the management group project and defining the pay component. Also support the PSC in completing the evaluation phase of the Civil Service Bargaining Unit Classification project.
- Work with PSC and line management to develop a succession management plan.
- Undertake a comprehensive occupational health and safety (OHS) initiative, including program refinement, renewing/establishing OHS policies throughout the department, and facilitating training and development for staff and management.
- Conduct an employee survey and report on the results with the aim of addressing issues identified in the survey.

Tourism and Culture

Mission

To champion the development, preservation, and promotion of tourism, culture, and heritage to stimulate economic growth and provide for stewardship of our natural and cultural heritage for the benefit of all Nova Scotians.

Strategic Goals

- **Economic Growth.** Develop the economic and export potential of Nova Scotia's tourism, culture and heritage sectors.
- **Stewardship.** Preserve, promote, present, and develop Nova Scotia's natural and cultural heritage.
- **Corporate Services.** Deliver professional services and corporate support to government and the department to facilitate accountability and good governance.

Core Business Areas

The core business areas of Tourism and Culture are centred on three strategic goals of the department: economic growth, stewardship, and corporate services.

1. Economic Growth

Development of Nova Scotia's tourism, culture, and heritage sectors is supported by all divisions of the department. Core business activities include the following.

Tourism Division

- Provides support and representation on the Nova Scotia Tourism Partnership Council, the public/private sector council mandated to provide advice and direction on tourism programs and investments.
- Manages contracts with outside agencies, including the provincial resorts management contract, Upper Clements Park, and Bluenose II, the Atlantic Canada Tourism Partnership, and fee-for-service contracts with tourism industry associations.
- Explores and develops effective sales and partnerships to promote and develop tourism, including facilitating sales, prospecting, intelligence gathering, information sharing, and following up leads with the travel trade and other private-sector partners.

- Undertakes tourism development and planning, including managing two investment programs designed to support the development, enhancement, and market-readiness of tourism attractions, sites, experiences, services, businesses, and products; preparing strategic development plans; undertaking product research; inspecting, licensing, and counselling fixed-roof accommodations and campground properties pursuant to the Tourist Accommodations Act and Regulations; supporting use of the Canada Select accommodation rating program; working with partners such as the Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia's Human Resource Council to implement business development programs; and responding to visitor compliments and complaints.
- Undertakes tourism marketing and planning, including implementing a high-impact marketing campaign promoting Nova Scotia to core markets; responding to inquiries through a toll-free central reservation and information service operated by CorporaTel, as well as inquiries generated through Nova Scotia's official tourism Web site, <www.novascotia.com>; distributing tourism literature through the Distribution Centre; managing and operating 11 provincial Visitor Information Centres in Nova Scotia and Maine, including providing in-house travel counselling; developing and implementing education and training programs for information centre staff; managing the contract of retail operations at six provincial visitor information centres; producing and disseminating current tourism statistics and research; and managing an electronic library of over 50,000 colour slides, negatives, and travel videos used in tourism promotions.

Culture Division

- Provides investment support and expertise to Nova Scotian cultural producers, organizations, and facilities through programs such as Industry Growth, Facilities, and Anchor Organizations. Project support is leading to increased international sales of Nova Scotian products, increased jobs in cultural industries, increased recognition of the value of cultural goods and services, and increased leveraging of private-sector investment.
- Develops and promotes craft and design by providing investment and managing the Nova Scotia Centre for Craft and Design. In addition to the Mary E. Black Gallery, the Centre offers workshops and courses in craft and design.
- Undertakes research and analysis in support of cultural producers to help develop and act on strategies aimed at growing industry subsectors, including music, publishing, and crafts.
- Develops and encourages alliances with the private sector and industry associations to identify opportunities and respond to challenges.

2. Stewardship

Preservation, promotion, presentation, and development of Nova Scotia's natural and cultural heritage are supported by all divisions of the department. Core business activities include the following:

Heritage Division

- Preserves, manages, studies, and interprets Nova Scotia's heritage for both residents and visitors. Through the Nova Scotia Museum, the division operates 27 provincial museums throughout the province, ranging from historic homes to historic villages. The Nova Scotia Museum, operating under the Nova Scotia Museum Act, is the most decentralized museum system in Canada and one of the oldest provincial museums. Programs, exhibits, and products serve both local residents and tourists in 142 Nova Scotia communities.

- Oversees legislated programs established to protect heritage buildings (Heritage Property Act); preserve significant archaeological, historical, and palaeontological sites and remains (Special Places Protection Act); and address concerns surrounding the province's abandoned cemeteries (Cemeteries Protection Act).
- Provides input into natural and cultural heritage concerns as part of the province's environmental assessment process and provides a similar service to the consulting community on a fee-for-service basis.
- Develops and delivers programs in support of preserving Nova Scotia's heritage, including providing financial support and advisory services through the Community Museum Assistance Program and through the Heritage Property Program.
- Works closely with provincial and municipal officials and staff in efforts to ensure the protection and continuing use of the province's rich built heritage.
- Oversees the Special Places Program to preserve, regulate, and study archaeological, historical, and palaeontological sites and remains in Nova Scotia.

Culture Division

- Works collaboratively with the Nova Scotia Arts and Culture Partnership Council on the planning, design, and delivery of arts and culture programs. This includes developing strategic, long-term plans to support and grow Nova Scotia's culture sector.
- Invests in youth arts organizations, cultural activities, anchor organizations, facilities, and professional artists. The division interacts with over 800 clients on an annual basis, providing opportunities for children and youth in the arts; encouraging participation in cultural activities; developing skills and production in the culture sector; and encouraging artistic development, creation, and presentation.
- Formally recognizes excellence in artistic achievement through award programs, including the Portia White Prize; the Grand Pré Prize/Prix Grand Pré, and the Aliant New Media Prize.
- Encourages the development of artistic excellence and stimulates interest in visual arts and craft among Nova Scotians and visitors through the Nova Scotia Art Bank, a purchase and loan program for professional Nova Scotian artists.

- Supports Nova Scotians studying in the arts by providing secretariat services to the Nova Scotia Talent Trust Scholarship Program.
- Provides research and policy analysis in support of division and department priorities and partners with other cultural organizations and levels of government to identify opportunities and respond to challenges.
- Provides administrative support for Nova Scotia's Multiculturalism Act and the Gaelic College Foundation Act.

Tourism Division

- Provides planning and policy support in preserving Nova Scotia's natural and cultural heritage for its value to tourism. Specific activities include the administration of the Peggy's Cove Commission Act, collaboration on sustainable tourism with the Departments of Natural Resources and Environment and Labour on Crown land, parks, and protected areas, and input into the Environmental Assessment Review process.

Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management

Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management (NSARM) fulfils its stewardship mandate under the legislative authority of the Public Archives Act in the following ways:

- Acquires and preserves archival records of provincial significance and facilitates access to those records.
- Encourages and assists in the development of the provincial archival community.
- Acquires, appraises, arranges, describes, and preserves archival holdings and makes those holdings widely available through on-site, distance, and Web-based public services, programs, and products.

3. Corporate Services

The department also delivers professional services to government and the department to facilitate effective corporate support and good governance.

Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management

Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management (NSARM) fulfils its corporate mandate under the legislative authority of the Government Records Act and the Public Archives Act. Its statutory mandate is to develop policies, standards, procedures, and services for effective records management in government and to be the permanent repository of the archival records of government, in order to document government accountability and the rights of citizens.

- Provides advisory services and supports for the development and implementation of department records management programs and delivers cost-effective records centre services to government.
- Manages the archival records of the government and administers access to those records under FOIPOP.

Corporate Affairs Division

Corporate Affairs supports the line divisions and department by coordinating the following functions policy, communications, finance, human resources, legal services, information management including records management and information technology (IT), audit, administration, and occupational health and safety (OH&S).

Priorities for 2003–2004

Tourism and Culture's priorities are centred on the department's three core business areas. Priorities for 2003–04 include

1. Economic Growth

The department will develop the economic and export potential of Nova Scotia's tourism, culture, and heritage sectors through the following initiatives:

2003 Tourism Plan

Recognizing the significant impact of the tourism sector to Nova Scotia's economy, tourism industry members and government came together to collaborate on the creation of the 2003 Tourism Plan. The plan was driven by the industry/government Nova Scotia Tourism Partnership Council and serves as a guide for all marketing, product development, research, operations and partnerships undertaken to meet the goals and objectives of the Nova Scotia Tourism Strategy. The department will work with tourism industry partners to implement the following 2003 Tourism Plan highlights:

- Raise Nova Scotia's "brand" awareness in key export markets through the implementation of high-impact advertising campaigns directed to core markets in Atlantic Canada, Ontario, Quebec, the northeastern USA, and Europe. Through a variety of direct advertising activities (e.g., direct mail, magazine, newspaper, radio, television, Internet), an overall investment of $5.3 million in tourism advertising, combined with a strategic one-time investment of $1 million in March 2003, is anticipated to generate more than 315,000 inquiries resulting in approximately $129 million in tourism expenditures in 2003.
- Develop a partnership strategy that recognizes all partners and identifies new ones in order to maximize tourism investment opportunities and increase the amount of money devoted to growing this industry. The department has a strong record in establishing partnerships and leveraging resources. The target for 2003 is to generate 60 cents in partnership funding from the private sector and other levels of government for every provincial dollar applied to tourism marketing.
- Have a commanding and compelling presence at the Toronto Travel and Leisure Show in 2003 by increasing tourism industry attendance and providing direct-to-consumer communications.
- Invest in product development initiatives targeting strategic priorities of seasonality, market-readiness/quality, and sustainability. In today's global tourism market, the competitiveness and sustainability of Nova Scotia's tourism industry is highly dependent on our ability to improve the quality of our tourism products and services. For 2003–04, every dollar invested in tourism development programming is anticipated to result in additional expenditures of $5.50 from partners in the private sector, community, or other levels of government.

Cultural Industries

The department recognizes that Nova Scotia's cultural industries are important to Nova Scotia's economy. Our cultural products have significant potential for growth—growth that will translate into opportunities for individuals, businesses, and communities throughout this province. Priorities in 2003–04 include the following:

- Work with Nova Scotia's music industry in support of a comprehensive music sector strategy. Activities will focus on aggressive marketing initiatives aimed at export markets and support for businesses and infrastructure, in keeping with our efforts to encourage economic growth, competitiveness, and prosperity.
- Launch a new industry growth program for Nova Scotia book publishers. The primary focus associated with investment in Nova Scotia's publishers is industrial development with an emphasis on out-of-province sales and encouragement and development of Nova Scotian writing, including gaining national and international recognition for Nova Scotia's stories and authors.
- Implement market development initiatives in partnership with the craft subsector, including participating in a federal/provincial trade mission to Boston with 20 craft-based businesses.
- Coordinate cultural trade missions focused on music and publishing and seize opportunities by working with Canadian consulates.
- Foster new relationships with the Nova Scotia Designer Crafts Council and Visual Arts Nova Scotia in delivering and enhancing services through the Nova Scotia Centre for Craft and Design and the Nova Scotia Art Bank.
- Actively work with other cultural producers in areas such as design, visual arts, literary arts, and new media to identify potential opportunities for strategic investment.

Acadian Celebrations

With the upcoming 2003–2005 anniversaries of French exploration, colonization, and settlement, including the third Congrès mondial acadien in 2004, Nova Scotia has an opportunity to capitalize on the economic growth potential of major activities and events related to tourism, culture, and heritage. The department intends to provide significant support to the 2003–05 Acadian celebrations through the following initiatives:

- Unveil a major new tourism marketing campaign aimed specifically at promoting the Acadian celebrations in key tourism markets. A high-profile campaign will strategically position Nova Scotia as the premier destination in the region in which to experience Acadian culture and history. Also planned is an increased in-market publicity/editorial program that will be delivered by in-market public relations specialists, in conjunction with our core marketing programs, and will be designed to generate additional publicity with a value in excess of $20 million. These marketing initiatives will involve television, print, direct mail, e-marketing, industry co-operative opportunities, and in-market promotions.

- Work with Le Village historique acadien de la Nouvelle-Écosse in West Pubnico to adopt the site into the Nova Scotia Museum system. Bringing Le Village historique acadien into the provincial museum system is a major show of support for the Congrès mondial acadien scheduled for the summer of 2004 and for this year's 350th anniversary of the Village of Pubnico.

- Launch, in co-operation with the Council of Nova Scotia Archives, "The Acadian Experience in Nova Scotia," an on-line thematic resource guide and virtual exhibit, fully searchable and province-wide in scope and participation, to complement Acadie 2003–05 and provide a significant Acadian/Cajun genealogical resource. NSARM will also produce a database for 3,600 births, deaths, and marriages from two surviving pre-Deportation (1702–55) Acadian church registers in Annapolis Royal.

- Integrate and highlight Acadian cultural experiences and tourism products in 2003 tourism core marketing campaigns. This includes the development of vignettes highlighting Acadian experiences in the 2003 Doer's and Dreamer's Guide, as well as highlighting Acadian festivals and events in the digest and wall map.

- Develop an Acadian Tourism Strategy that identifies development opportunities and priorities through a series of roundtables with stakeholders throughout the province for the long-term development and enhancement of Acadian tourism experiences. The department will work with partners and the tourism industry throughout the Acadian communities of Nova Scotia.
- Work with other departments and levels of government (Office of Acadian Affairs and Canadian Heritage) to maximize investment for the implementation of strategic Acadian initiatives.
- Implement and expand service excellence programs to enhance the market-readiness of Acadian tourism businesses, attractions, and communities. French Superhost and "L'Acadie par excellence" programs will be developed and implemented to encourage individual Acadian tourism operators to increase their standards of excellence and commitment to quality.
- Partner with the Federation of Nova Scotian Heritage to develop a program and workshops for a provincial conference on early Acadian heritage and culture to assist communities in developing programs for the Acadian celebrations.

Tourism Vision

To capitalize on significant economic growth opportunities for Nova Scotia, the industry/government Tourism Partnership Council unveiled a bold vision for tourism at Nova Scotia's 2002 Tourism Conference and Trade Show. The council offered 11 recommendations as a road map for unprecedented growth in this industry. The department will participate in a multi-partner team with the Tourism Partnership Council and Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia to commence steps to implement the vision. Nova Scotia's vision for tourism challenges the industry to make dramatic advances in the development of tourism in Nova Scotia, building toward the vision of "100 per cent revenue growth over the next decade." The tourism vision will require change that creates the environment for growth in tourism. It will require thinking differently, not just adapting. The vision can be realized if tourism stakeholders including business, labour, and government and its partners, work together to create a tourism-first attitude in the development of the tourism industry.

Heritage Attractions

Presenting Nova Scotia's natural and cultural heritage in innovative ways that engage visitors is important for the long-term preservation and appreciation of the province's heritage. It is also a major opportunity to enhance the competitiveness of heritage facilities in supporting economic growth in communities throughout the province through increased tourism visitation. The Nova Scotia Museum will renew its interpretation of the history and natural history of the province through several related initiatives. Interpretive renewal will enhance the representation of cultural diversity and improve the market-readiness of museum presentation. Specific priorities include the following:

- Develop a strategy for making heritage tourism attractions "come alive" through living history (animation/costuming/interpretation) through a departmental working group representing the Heritage, Tourism and Culture divisions. Opportunities and partnerships with stakeholders will be identified for enhancement and growth of living history activities in the province.
- Develop two new interpretive products highlighting our provincial.

Bay of Fundy

The Bay of Fundy offers a variety of unique experiences from the highest tides in the world, abundant migratory birds and whales, and captivating and unusual landscape formations, to international fossil discoveries. The area provides an opportunity for the region to be an internationally recognized tourism destination. To maximize the opportunities offered by the Bay of Fundy, the department will partner on a combination of initiatives:

- In partnership with New Brunswick, Tourism Atlantic (ACOA), and the tourism industry around the Bay of Fundy, implement marketing activities promoting the Bay of Fundy as a destination, targeting the northeastern US. The targets for the marketing campaign include generating 10,000 new inquiries, increasing the conversion rate from 16 to 20 per cent, increasing average visitor party expenditure to $2,000, and achieving a minimum return on investment in the campaign of $10 for every $1 invested.
- Support tourism development in the Bay of Fundy region through the Bay of Fundy Recommended Experience program by working with individual operators to increase their standards of excellence and commitment to quality. Twenty-four operators have been designated as "Recommended Experience Operators" after having successfully completed the program. Through activities such as site evaluations and product knowledge tours, the department will continue with implementation of the market-readiness program with current Bay of Fundy Recommended Experience operators and investigate future extension of the program with other funding partners.
- Work with partners to prepare the nomination for the designation of Joggins as a UNESCO World Heritage site under the "natural criteria" of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention. Priorities include the development of a site development plan, site infrastructure enhancements, and an information package supporting the nomination to Canadian Heritage.

Cultural Tourism

Both Nova Scotians and visitors to our province value our cultural activities, which are an integral part of our social fabric and quality of life. To build on existing cultural tourism strengths, the department will establish a committee to encourage and support cultural tourism initiatives in partnership with sector stakeholders. Efforts will focus on the following:

- Enhance existing links and promotion of music and theatre as a regional draw and increase awareness of products in off-season.
- Enhance culturally focused familiarization tours.
- Build an inventory of cultural activity images for use in marketing and promotion.

Expansion of the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic

The Maritime Museum of the Atlantic is a major steward and presenter of the maritime heritage of Nova Scotia and an important generator of tourism visitation. Working with partners, the department will undertake a multi-year initiative to examine the potential of expanding the site into a truly significant heritage tourism attraction on the Halifax waterfront. Priorities for 2003–04 include undertaking a concept study and detailed feasibility analysis that considers public/private partnerships with key stakeholders, including the Canadian Naval Heritage Foundation, Canadian Naval Memorial Trust, Waterfront Development Corporation, Halifax Regional Municipality, and private-sector businesses.

Red Tape Reduction

Tourism and Culture is responsible for administration of the Tourist Accommodation Act and Regulations, which require fixed-roofed accommodations and camping establishments in Nova Scotia to be inspected and licensed.

- In consultation with the tourism industry, implement a streamlined process by expanding the licensing information kit to include all licences, permits, and approvals required to obtain a fixed-roof accommodation or campground licence from other regulatory departments. The information kit will be made available on the department Web site. Staff act as the liaison between operators and other regulatory bodies, so operators can get the information they need from a single source.
- Implement changes to the Accommodation Act and Regulations. These changes, which are based on valuable input from the tourism industry, support the business environment and address issues related to quality.

2. Stewardship

The department will preserve, promote, present, and develop Nova Scotia's natural and cultural heritage through the following initiatives.

Nova Scotia Arts and Culture Partnership Council

An important development in the continued growth of the culture sector is the new Nova Scotia Arts and Culture Partnership Council. In 2003–04, this new 15-member council will be in place to gather input from people active in Nova Scotia's cultural life and to provide advice and direction for government's ongoing investment in our artists, cultural industries, and cultural activities. Priorities for the new joint culture sector/government council in 2003–04 include the following:

- Confirm the vision, mission, and mandate of the council, establish operating guidelines, and develop methods to gather ongoing stakeholder input on plans and priorities.
- Develop an annual culture sector development plan, which will require program and investment priority reviews as well as establishment of specific performance targets on program activities and precise evaluation methods for programs.
- Develop mechanisms to better assist program applicants throughout the province in accessing department programs and services. Efforts will encourage development of new artistic talent and include the establishment of a mentoring program where individuals who were successful in the past could assist new applicants.
- Advise on the long-term direction of the Endowment Fund, including spending priorities and best options to increase the fund.

Collections and Archival Holdings Management

The department, through the Heritage Division and Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management (NSARM), plays a key role in the preservation of Nova Scotia's rich heritage resources, encompassing both material culture (museum artifacts and built heritage) and documentary heritage. The department is committed to improving the management and preservation of these heritage resources. Priorities include the following:

- Develop plans and storage systems to upgrade artifact storage facilities at Uniacke Estate Museum Park and the Museum of Industry (Stellarton).

- Relocate up to 3000 artifacts to locations with improved storage facilities.
- Expand archival-quality storage capacity in the second year of a four-year tangible capital asset (TCA) project at NSARM to install high-density mobile shelving throughout the archives building.
- Improve preventive conservation of archival holdings at NSARM through a major rehousing project and preservation microfilming, including continued liaison with Genealogical Society of Utah on its complimentary microfilming of archival holdings of genealogical significance.
- Initiate phased rationalization of holdings between NSARM and the Heritage Division.
- Implement the Provincial Cooperative Acquisition Strategy in cooperation with other Council of Nova Scotia Archives institutional members.

On-Line Heritage Resources

As part of its role as a steward of Nova Scotia's heritage resources, the department is committed to making those archives and museum resources available to a wide and diverse audience by significantly expanding and enhancing on-line public access. This will increase public awareness and appreciation of the province's heritage, support educational curriculum development, contribute to increased on-site visitation, and enhance the province's attractiveness as a heritage tourism destination. Priorities include the following:

- Explore improved public access and revenue generation/recovery opportunities offered by the development of a departmental on-line heritage image gallery operated by a commercial service provider.
- Expand on-line public access to archival resources through the completion of four major new Web-based resources, including virtual exhibits, resource guides, and digitized holdings relating to the schooner Bluenose, Lunenburg's 250th anniversary, Acadian church registers (1702–55), and a searchable database of pre-1900 land petitions.
- Assist the Council of Nova Scotia Archives in producing archival thematic resource guides and virtual exhibits, in particular "The Acadian Experience in Nova Scotia."

Multiculturalism

Having a strong multiculturalism focus in Nova Scotia ties directly into government's core social, cultural, and economic goals. In support of these goals, the department will develop and commence implementation of a provincial multiculturalism strategy in partnership with stakeholders. Priorities include the following:

- Establish an intergovernmental forum at the senior policy level to serve as a resource to help the department develop an inventory of government policies, programs, and services that have a multiculturalism component.
- Undertake a comprehensive review of other jurisdictions with a focus on specific strategies/activities in place and the role of external advisory groups in developing multicultural policy.
- Establish an external working group with representation from stakeholders, including the Multiculturalism Association of Nova Scotia (MANS) to develop comprehensive strategies to support the goals of Nova Scotia's Multiculturalism Act.

Heritage Property Initiative

Nova Scotia's Heritage Property program is designed to identify, preserve, and encourage continued use of Nova Scotia's heritage structures. The announcement of the Canadian Registration of Heritage Properties (CRHP) program by the federal government presents an opportunity to integrate efforts and resources to enhance the long-term preservation of heritage properties in Nova Scotia. Departmental priorities for 2003–04 include the following:

- Develop a Nova Scotia strategy for participation in the national CRHP program.
- Negotiate a bilateral agreement between the governments of Nova Scotia and Canada based on the CRHP program's objectives.
- Develop a plan to engage Nova Scotia municipalities as participants in the program.

Community Cultural Development

Because cultural expression is so important to communities all across Nova Scotia, the department will strengthen regional links to draw out and encourage cultural activity. Priorities include the following:

- Organize and host a workshop in 2003–04 on community cultural development in partnership with community arts councils to identify opportunities for co-operation.
- Introduce communications vehicles linking community arts councils throughout the province.

Cultural Infrastructure

The department recognizes that the culture sector needs a foundation of stable and effectively managed organizations and institutions to sustain the sector's health. The department will begin the following initiatives:

- Develop an inventory (including asset value) of Nova Scotia's cultural facilities and organizations with a view to identifying needs and opportunities.
- Research ways to help organizations achieve greater stability, including exploring strategies used in other jurisdictions and other sectors within Nova Scotia.

Mi'kmawey-Debert

The department recognizes its role in preserving and presenting the First Nations heritage and culture. Mi'kmawey-Debert is an especially important a Mi'kmaq archaeological site dating back some 10,600 years. These archaeological resources have been designated as a National Historic Site and a Nova Scotia Special Place. In 2003–04, the department, through the Nova Scotia Museum, will work with the Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq to draft a stewardship plan to protect the sites and advance the interpretation of this important place for Nova Scotians and visitors to our province. The plan will encompass site management, archaeological collections, interpretation, and research.

Gaelic Culture

The department recognizes a need to work with communities to preserve and present the Gaelic language and culture for the benefit of all Nova Scotians and visitors. A new Cape Breton cultural development officer with a focus on Gaelic initiatives will be in place to work with partners to pursue the following priorities

- Review input from public consultations on Gaelic and work with stakeholders to develop goals and objectives for the strategic growth of Gaelic culture.

- Identify specific initiatives that can be undertaken through a memorandum of understanding recently negotiated between Nova Scotia and Scotland.

Integrated Resource Management (IRM)

Integrated resource management is a planning and decision-making process that coordinates resource use so that long-term sustainable benefits are optimized and conflicts among users are minimized. The Department of Natural Resources has taken the lead on implementing IRM for provincial Crown land resources. Recognizing the long-term sustainable benefits of tourism, the industry/government Tourism Partnership Council has led the development of a tourism resource-valuation modelling project. The department will implement this model into the IRM Mulgrave Plateau pilot project and conduct an assessment of the model's capability and usefulness, which will determine future phases of implementation. Based on a model outlining archaeological potential, cultural and historical resources will also be integrated into the process for the IRM Mulgrave Plateau pilot project.

3. Corporate Services

The priorities in this area centre on the delivery of professional services and corporate support to government and the department to facilitate accountability and good governance.

Improving and Extending Records Management and Archival Services to Government

Through NSARM the department provides records management and archival services to government in order to ensure the effective management of government records and to document government accountability and the rights of citizens. It is committed to extending and improving its integrated archives and records management program. Priorities include the following:

- Assist in the implementation of the Corporate Records Management Policy.
- Improve and rationalize Records Centre service delivery by expanding storage capacity, reducing records disposition backlog, and introducing service charges.
- Continue development, revision, and implementation of departmental STORs (records schedules).

- Identify and reduce systemic barriers to transfer of archival records in relation to targeted departments with approved STORs.
- Launch administrative histories of departments, agencies, boards, and commissions on line on the government Web site.

Program Evaluation

The department recognizes that evaluation is key to generating accurate, objective, and evidence-based information to assist with sound decisions on policies, programs, and investments. To improve our effectiveness and accountability, the department will pursue the following priorities:

- Complete the establishment of indicators and outcomes for key program areas.
- Identify and develop benchmarks, particularly in culture and heritage, based on comprehensive studies of the sectors.
- Develop a framework for ongoing evaluation and monitoring of results.

Asset Management

Tourism and Culture is responsible for managing a wide range of provincially owned capital assets valued in the millions of dollars. These assets include over 200 heritage buildings, three provincial resorts, 11 visitor information centres, Bluenose II, and Upper Clements Park. The department manages these assets directly or through agreements with the private sector and not-for-profit societies. To improve accountability and overall management of these assets, the department will pursue the following priorities in 2003–04:

- Initiate a process that will revise/develop formal management agreements with locally managed provincial museums to clarify accountability. Efforts will centre on the development of management agreements at two provincial sites to be used as a model for all locally managed provincial museum sites.
- Complete year two of the approved capital investment program for the provincial resorts moving to a four-star accommodation quality rating and projected revenues.
- Work with Transportation and Public Works to complete an inventory of Tourism and Culture's heritage buildings and visitor information centres to be utilized as a baseline for development of a long-term plan that sustains these important capital assets.

Information Management (IM)

The department recognizes the importance of the effective management of information to corporate accountability and good governance. The department will raise the level of IM awareness and required skills through activities such as orientation and training. The department will also implement a model records management program throughout Tourism and Culture. Priorities include STOR implementation, training, a phased implementation of electronic records management (ERM) software, and development of departmental records management policies and procedures. Another IM priority is the execution of a technology-refresh plan that ensures that the department has sufficient capacity to continue to serve the public and attract visitors to the province through the use of the department's Web sites, which are some of the most active in the provincial government. In addition, an investment tracking system will be implemented to provide timely, client-focused service across the department's three sectors.

Communications Plan

The department recognizes the importance of internal communications as a way of bringing staff closer together and providing easy access to work-related information and resources. A two-pronged approach to improving communications within the department involves both a number of initiatives at the management level and the development of new or improved communications tools for all staff.

A leadership team is focusing on areas where more collaboration among divisions and operations can be applied to projects and initiatives. A communications working group has developed a plan that will see the development of a staff intranet Web site, a corporate social committee, and employee information forums. The department's newsletter will be redesigned and published on a consistent schedule.

Working closely with Human Resources and their new initiatives, the goal is to improve the internal environment of the department and to make the department an even better place in which to work.

Human Resources Plan

Building on the 2002–03 priority of establishing a Human Resource Plan for the Department of Tourism and Culture, 2003–04 will see the roll-out of a number of key HR initiatives. These initiatives include the implementation of an orientation program, the use of exit interviews, a greater focus on learning plans for all employees, a renewed effort on performance management, and continued focus on strengthening leadership capacity. The purpose of these initiatives, as well as the intent to further develop the HR plan, is to ensure that Tourism and Culture has staff that are competent, satisfied, and able to conduct their responsibilities in a way that enables the department to meet its stated goals and objectives. Tourism and Culture will also undertake efforts to become the model department within the Nova Scotia government for wellness promotion among its employees.

Transportation and Public Works

Mission

To construct, maintain, and manage provincial highways, buildings, and related infrastructure and to provide accommodation, property, procurement, and corporate information technology and communications services to support sustainable economic growth and social well-being.

Transportation and Public Works is an infrastructure department that

- provides services—direct or procured—to Nova Scotians and other government departments
- focuses on our clients
- commits to safety, cost-effectiveness, and quality.

Strategic Goals

The following goals support the corporate priorities of this government. A safe and effective transportation system plays a critical role in supporting the government's efforts to maximize employment and economic growth. Building infrastructure and provincial real property assets that are effectively and efficiently managed and providing government services that meet the needs of client departments and agencies are essential in supporting the strategic delivery of government programs and services.

- Enhance the value and safety of the transportation system.
- Manage provincial real property, effectively and efficiently, for government's best strategic advantage.
- Provide the infrastructure and related policies necessary to support economic growth of the province.
- Provide efficient, cost-effective, and environmentally sound government services to address customers' needs.

Core Business Areas

The department has three operational areas: Highway Operations, Public Works and Government Services. Supporting sections include Policy and Planning, Public Affairs and Communications, Human Resources, Financial Services and Information Technology.

The department's core businesses can be summarized as follows:

1. Highway Operations

This area includes construction, maintenance, and operation of provincial roads, bridges, and ferries.

Programs and services in this core business area are designed to ensure efficient and effective construction and maintenance of the provincial highway system, along with its safe operation, thereby contributing to economic well-being within the province.

2. Public Works

This area includes planning and management of highway and building infrastructure, including:

- highway, bridge, and building design services
- project management services for government construction projects
- environmental services
- administration of provincial industrial water utilities

Under this core business area, programs and services have been established to support the departmental goals of providing a safe transportation system and provincial infrastructure to contribute to economic growth and sound environmental services to meet customers' needs.

3. Government Services

This area includes provision of support services to provincial government departments and agencies, including:

- accommodation and property services
- government procurement and supply processes
- stationery stockroom
- postal services
- the delivery of telecommunications and information technology to meet the corporate business needs of government
- public safety field communications services, including trunked mobile and legacy radio services
- administration of industrial parks and malls

Programs and services under this core business area have been designed to provide high-quality services that support other government departments and agencies in the delivery of their programs to Nova Scotians.

In addition to functions related to the provincial highway system, the department is responsible for the development and implementation of policies relating to air, marine, rail, and road transport systems, including the administration of the safe operation of provincially regulated railways.

Priorities for 2003–2004

1. Highway Operations

- Provide cost-effective maintenance services for provincial roads, bridges, and ferries and provide snow and ice control on provincial highways so that public satisfaction levels and condition ratings are maintained. This is to be accomplished through the use of an appropriate mix of in-house and contracted private-sector services. The benchmarks to be used for the physical condition of the infrastructure are the International Roughness Index for 100-series highways (2002 value, 1.48) and the provincial condition survey for all roads (2002 value, F), while public satisfaction levels are to be measured by the department's annual customer satisfaction survey (overall satisfaction of 50 per cent in 2002).
- Continue to adjust the provincial salting program and complete the province's salt management plan to address concerns raised by the federal government's review of the use of road salts and their effect on the environment. Actions will include continuing construction of new storage facilities to increase storage capacity by an additional 10 per cent, expanding the use of the Road Weather Information Systems by upgrading five older sites in Kings County and completing the Highway 104 system between Antigonish and Sydney, and increasing the number of department units equipped to pre-wet salt and sand/salt mixtures by 50 per cent.
- Begin a steel-truss bridge replacement program with the goal of replacing or upgrading the 65 highest-priority steel-truss bridges over the next five years. Program goals in 2003–04 are to put in place sufficient engineering design resources, develop different "prefabricated design types," and build four to six structures to evaluate the different design types.
- Complete and open the current phase of Highway 101 from Mount Uniacke to Ellershouse, and commence construction on Highway 125, as part of the federal cost-shared agreement signed in 2001. Initiate subgrade construction on the section of Highway 103 announced in fiscal 2002–03, Beechville to Tantallon; and continue work on the Highway 103 Barrington bypass.
- Complete the Seal Island bridge deck replacement project and the Margaree Harbour bridge.

- Continue the ferry fleet renewal program. Complete construction of the replacement for the Joshua Slocum ferry and finalize a replacement priority list and schedule for the remaining ferries.

2. Public Works

- Provide design and construction management services, under the school renovation and construction program, for a variety of projects. These projects will include Phase II renovation of Sir John A. Macdonald High School in Halifax Regional Municipality; construction of South Colchester High School, Windsor High School, and Pictou East and Pictou West High Schools (completion 2003); and construction of Sydney Elementary, Shelburne High School, and Truro Junior High School (completion 2004–05).
- Complete design and planning and obtain environmental approvals for expansion and upgrades to the province's 100-series highway system. In addition, pre-engineering and environmental work will continue on Highway 101 from St. Croix to Avonport and on Highway 104 from New Glasgow to Sutherlands River. This pre-engineering and environmental work is planned to be completed in 2004.
- Implement a bridge management program for the province and begin loading data collected in previous years, with a goal of 67 per cent of provincial bridges inspected and loading data into the new system by March 2004.
- Evaluate a Geographic Information System (GIS) pilot project conducted with the Department of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations Geomatics Centre. This pilot project created a geographic reference system for Cumberland County. This system could be used to support bridge management and other information systems implemented by the department in the future.

- Continue to pursue four of the department's obligations with respect to buildings, as outlined in Nova Scotia's Energy Strategy Implementation Plan. These obligations are to lead by example with a government house-in-order program that has targets for energy use in existing provincially funded buildings; to implement a plan for early conversion of provincially funded buildings to natural gas where it is economically feasible to do so; to begin to phase in energy-efficiency standards for commercial heating, ventilating, and air conditioning equipment in provincially funded buildings; and to develop and maintain an inventory of energy use for all provincially funded facilities.

3. Government Services

- Investigate, with other levels of government, opportunities for the development of provincially owned property.
- In partnership with the Office of Economic Development, continue supplier development programs and Nova Scotia Business Opportunities Initiatives (NSBOI) to improve the flow of information about all public-sector—federal, provincial, and MASH (municipalities, agencies, schools, and hospitals)—buying opportunities to Nova Scotia companies (e.g., distribution of new Procurement Branch tenders brochure). In addition, promote the expanded value and use of e-commerce in public procurement.
- Develop an electronic procurement (e-procurement) action plan for the prioritization and implementation of e-procurement projects considered essential and critical to the procurement function within government as well as for the MASH sector.

- Determine the government's current and future Data Centre needs for the storage and management of electronic information and develop a request for proposals for those requirements. Processing and data for significant provincial systems, such as the Human Resources Management System, Registry of Motor Vehicles, and the Provincial Assessment System, reside at the Data Centre. In addition, the Data Centre hosts other applications for government departments, including SAP and the Health Information System.

- Develop a long-term strategy for the future of provincial mobile radio infrastructure. The strategy will determine the most appropriate system for the use of this infrastructure in public safety services in the future.

Priorities in the Area of Transportation Policy

- Provide Nova Scotia's input into major federal legislative and policy reviews affecting all modes of transportation.

- Work, through the Council of Atlantic Premiers, on regional co-operative initiatives to harmonize measures affecting the movement of freight by truck and to improve air service to, from, and within the Atlantic provinces.

Government

BUSINESS PLAN

FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2003-2004

Part Three

Public Service Vote
Business Plans

Office of Aboriginal Affairs

Mission

To lead Nova Scotia in Aboriginal affairs by building mutual understanding, respect and a lasting relationship.

Strategic Goals

- To represent Nova Scotians' interests effectively in intergovernmental, bilateral, and tri-party initiatives and negotiations.
- To facilitate and support a coordinated approach within government on matters related to Aboriginal issues.
- To work collaboratively with the Mi'kmaq and with other federal and provincial agencies to foster economic development and community capacity building.
- To enhance awareness of Mi'kmaq culture.
- To build a sustainable framework for First Nation–government relations.

Core Business Areas

The Office of Aboriginal Affairs carries out its responsibilities through the following four core businesses areas:

1. Negotiations and Related Discussions

The Office of Aboriginal Affairs is responsible for coordinating departmental input into the negotiations process and representing the province's interests in negotiations and related discussions with the federal government and the Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq.

2. Aboriginal and Intergovernmental Relations

This area includes working with Aboriginal communities and organizations and other levels of government to coordinate Aboriginal initiatives, develop strategies, and build and maintain a sustainable framework for First Nation–government relations.

3. Interdepartmental Coordination, Policy Analysis, and Strategic Advice

This business area includes providing corporate policy and strategic advice and support to departments and agencies concerning Aboriginal issues.

4. Communication, Public Education, and Awareness

A key element of the Office of Aboriginal Affair's activity is aimed at increasing understanding of issues related to Aboriginal people in Nova Scotia. This business area employs the use of strategic communication and public education tools both internally to the provincial government and externally to enhance understanding and raise awareness.

Priorities for 2003–2004

1. Negotiations and Related Discussions

- During the coming year, following on the three party commitment to the Umbrella Agreement, Nova Scotia will continue working on the negotiation of a Framework Agreement with the Mi'kmaq and the Government of Canada. This agreement will outline the process and procedures for the negotiation of treaty-related issues and will identify the substantive issues to be negotiated by the parties.
- During 2003–04, the government will begin participation in a Mi'kmaq-Nova Scotia-Canada process to address consultation requirements between government and First Nations in specific circumstances.
- The Office of Aboriginal Affairs will continue to coordinate the involvement and input of provincial departments and agencies in treaty-related and consultation negotiations. This corporate approach will ensure that provincial interests are fully identified and represented through the negotiations. A senior officials group representing key provincial departments has been created to ensure that provincial interests are fully understood as we enter the formal negotiation phase.
- The government is taking steps to ensure that the interests of municipalities, third parties, and other stakeholders are understood and respected. These steps mainly involve the development of mechanisms to provide timely and accurate information as well as to receive advice for negotiators.

2. Aboriginal and Intergovernmental Relations

- A key element of the Umbrella Agreement was a recommitment to the Tripartite Forum, a mechanism created in 1997 to resolve issues of mutual concern between Canada, Nova Scotia, and the Mi'kmaq. The last several years have been ones of transition and restructuring. With the completion of this transition period, the forum in the coming year will be an important vehicle for building relationships and developing collaborative solutions to the many challenges facing First Nations in Nova Scotia. In addition to coordinating the provincial involvement in this process, the Office of Aboriginal Affairs will be taking a leadership role in implementing a communications plan to support the activities of the forum and create a greater awareness of the uniqueness and benefits of the forum.
- The Mi'kmaq Legal Support Network (MLSN), created in 2002–03, provides an umbrella network to support current and future justice programs and services directed toward Nova Scotia's Aboriginal community. The Office of Aboriginal Affairs participates in this initiative in partnership with the Nova Scotia Department of Justice, Justice Canada, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, and the Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq (on behalf of all First Nation communities in Nova Scotia). During 2003–04, the focus of the MLSN will be on the development and implementation of the Mi'kmaq Courtworker Program to assist in guiding Aboriginal people through the court system in Nova Scotia.

- Through the Tripartite Forum, the Office of Aboriginal Affairs will work with the Mi'kmaq and Canada in developing and implementing the Mi'kmaq Youth Recreation and Active Circle for Living (MYRACL) initiative, which promotes active and healthy living in Mi'kmaq communities across Nova Scotia. Already, government through the Office of Health Promotion is collaborating with First Nations, along with the rest of the province, on an physical activity initiative for children and youth (PACY), which, so far, is engaging First Nation communities such as Pictou Landing, Waycobah, and Membertou. The Mi'kmaq Sport and Recreation Circle, which has existed for several years, will be formalized as a key mechanism to address the health and social challenges facing many Aboriginal communities. This will have direct linkages to a number of departments including Health, the Office of Health Promotion, Education, and Community Services.
- A new series of gaming agreements with First Nations will be put in place to continue government's significant contribution to Mi'kmaq economic and community development. Over the last five years, these agreements have contributed approximately $85.5 million to Mi'kmaq communities. Currently, 11 of the 13 Mi'kmaq communities participate in these agreements.
- The Office of Aboriginal Affairs, working with the Department of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations and the Department of Finance, is completing the negotiation process to settle the province's $20-million past liability in relation to provincial fuel tax collected in error from Status Indians who have purchased fuel from service stations located on reserve in Nova Scotia. This interdepartmental working group will continue the administration and issue management of the refunds program.

- During 2003–04, the Office of Aboriginal Affairs, in collaboration with Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations and representatives from the Mi'kmaq, will complete the implementation of an innovative program to provide a tax exemption to Status Indians for purchases of fuel on reserve. This program will utilize Nova Scotia drivers licenses and a unique point-of-sale system to provide this exemption, required under the federal Indian Act.
- The Federal/Provincial/Territorial/Aboriginal (FPTA) Forum, created in 1999, provides for discussion among governments and national Aboriginal organizations on issues of common priority. During 2003–04, Nova Scotia, in collaboration with Prince Edward Island, will act as provincial co-chair. Following direction from a November 2002 ministers/leaders meeting held in Iqaluit, the focus of the forum in the coming year will be on education and housing. In addition ongoing activities in the areas of aboriginal youth and the economic participation of Aboriginal women will continue. At the provincial level, the Office of Aboriginal Affairs will work with departments, the Mi'kmaq, and regional staff from the federal government to adapt this work to the realities of Nova Scotia.

3. Interdepartmental Coordination, Policy Analysis and Strategic Advice

- With the assistance of departments and agencies, the Office of Aboriginal Affairs will work on developing and implementing an Aboriginal Policy Framework to guide government's overall approach to Aboriginal issues. The Policy Framework will be consistent with and support government's overall strategic direction on economic and social policy. This framework will enhance effectiveness and efficiency and provide a strategic approach to government's response on Aboriginal issues, as well as clarity with respect to roles and responsibilities.
- The Office of Aboriginal Affairs will continue to work closely with departments and agencies to provide advice and support to them in defining their approaches to addressing Aboriginal issues. One such initiative to note is Mi'kmawey Debert, involving the Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq and several provincial departments and agencies. The aim of this initiative is to protect a valuable and unique archaeological site while developing a facility that can share the history and culture of the Mi'kmaq.

4. Communication, Public Education, and Awareness

- The Office of Aboriginal Affairs will develop and implement strategies to enhance public understanding and awareness of issues related to Aboriginal people in Nova Scotia, in collaboration with the Mi'kmaq and federal government whenever possible.
- The Office of Aboriginal Affairs will work collaboratively with the Tripartite Forum on the development of a comprehensive communications plan. The Tripartite Forum, as previously noted, is one of the principal vehicles in forging a committed and long-lasting relationship amongst all three forum members.
- The Office of Aboriginal Affairs will provide support for the 11th annual Mi'kmaq Treaty Day events to be held at Province House in the Fall of 2003.
- The Office of Aboriginal Affairs will ensure that appropriate communication tools are developed and implemented for sharing information with departments and agencies. For example, the Office of Aboriginal Affairs will develop and implement interdepartmental protocols and policies to ensure a more consistent and coordinated approach to addressing Aboriginal issues. One such tool in development is an intranet Web site devoted to profiling First Nation communities within Nova Scotia.
- The Office of Aboriginal Affairs will facilitate processes within government to enhance cultural awareness of Mi'kmaq people. In the last fiscal year, 50 participants (in four sessions) from various government departments have taken the Orientation to Mi'kmaq First Nation Culture course. In the coming year, the Office of Aboriginal Affairs will focus and participate in another course, called Aboriginal Perceptions Training, which was developed by the Aboriginal Justice Learning Network. The training is a comprehensive six-session course designed to equip participants with necessary tools for working in and with Aboriginal communities.

Communications Nova Scotia

Mission

To provide communications leadership and excellence, using the highest standards of accuracy, clarity, consistency, and reliability, to help Nova Scotians understand government's plan, initiatives, and achievements.

Strategic Goals

- Through quality communications leadership and practices, help Nova Scotians understand the actions of their government.
- Obtain the highest quality and best-value communications products and services for government.
- Expand and strengthen internal and external communications by making communications an integral part of all business in government.
- Enhance opportunities for economic growth in related private-sector communications fields.

Core Business Areas

1. Communications Planning

This area provides strategic communications planning and advice as government's central communications agency, long-term communications planning for departments and agencies, provides issues management support, internal communication advice, media relations and training, and support for corporate communication needs.

2. Creative Services

This area provides in-house services, subcontracting, and project management for video and audio production, graphic design for conventional and new media projects, photography, editorial services, multimedia production, and Internet and electronic publishing; acts as government's Web master; and is responsible for administration of the provincial Visual Identity Policy and Internet Content Policy.

3. Media Services

This area acts as the government agency of record, providing creative and administrative services for the preparation and placement of advertising; provides media monitoring, logistical support, and communications support, including editing/rewriting of news releases, feature stories, speeches, and ad copy; and distributes all government news releases to Nova Scotia news media.

4. Publication Services

This area meets government's print requirements (including forms, stationery, brochures, books, specialty items, and security printing) through in-house resources and by providing print procurement, print production management, and quality control for vendor-supplied and in-house projects. It also manages the provincial Co-publishing Program

Priorities for 2003–2004

The following major initiatives or planned accomplishments are fundamental to the success of each core business area.

1. Communications Planning

- Build on corporate communication planning efforts. Continue long-term strategic communication planning, for each department and agency, which appropriately supports government's corporate plan.
- Broaden the agency's professional development strategy to strengthen general communication skills and further identify and develop areas of specific expertise in communication.
- Enhance the communication effort through the use of technologies that further advance effective engagement with Nova Scotians.

2. Creative Services

- Establish a focal point for CNS client service.
- Foster relationships among the departments and agencies that can lead to efficiencies and economies through co-operative communications projects.
- Research and implement technological changes to maintain compatibility with communications industry sectors and information delivery.

3. Media Services

- Focus on improving service through better use of technology and through private sector contracts.
- Continue to work with the media outlets throughout the province to accelerate delivery of news releases and advertising.
- Build on our service to government through our use of electronic clipping for media monitoring.
- Play a key role in the research and organization of professional development for the agency to equip our staff to better inform Nova Scotians of the government's services, initiatives, and goals.

4. Publication Services

- Continue the rationalization of production printing assets and technology upgrade to meet government's print needs and to achieve currency with rapidly changing print technology.
- Review, with the Procurement Branch of Transportation and Public Works, government print-buying policies as they relate to vendor qualification and geographical locations.
- Complete review of departments' documents with a view to expanding the co-publishing policy to involve commercial publishers in "turnkey" contract publishing.

Nova Scotia Emergency Measures Organization (EMO)

Mission

To ensure the safety and security of Nova Scotians and their property by providing for a prompt and coordinated response to an emergency.

Strategic Goals

In accomplishing its mission, EMO (NS) seeks to manage the consequences of emergencies. An effectively managed emergency will always be less costly, not only in social terms but also in financial terms. By reducing the financial consequences of emergencies, EMO (NS) supports the priorities of government related to fiscal sustainability and a balanced budget.

The strategic goals of EMO for the 2003–04 fiscal year are as follows:

- **Decrease the province's financial exposure in the aftermath of emergencies.** Through its programs of proactive emergency preparedness and response planning, EMO empowers individuals and management within the public and private sector to take steps to effectively respond to any type of emergency situation. An effective response will tend to reduce the social, financial, and health costs of an emergency, reducing or even eliminating the requirement for government funding to recover from the consequences of the emergency.

  By decreasing the amount of government financial assistance that will be required in the aftermath of a disaster, this goal contributes to and supports the government's priority with respect to fiscal sustainability and a balanced budget.

- **Improve the province's ability to respond to and recover from a terrorist-based emergency.** One fallout from the New York World Trade Center disaster has been increased focus on the need for the ability to respond to terrorist-based emergencies. With the assistance of federal government funding, EMO (NS) will focus its efforts in 2003–04 on improving the ability of municipal units to respond to chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear incidents. By reducing both the social and financial costs of terrorist-based emergencies, this goal supports the government's priority of stabilizing health costs, fiscal sustainability, and a balanced budget.

- **Increase the speed and efficiency with which callers to 911 receive emergency assistance.** EMO (NS) administers the province's 911 emergency reporting service. It is an established fact that the sooner an emergency is reported and responded to, the greater opportunity there is to reduce casualties and property losses. By reducing both the social and financial costs of all types of emergencies, this goal supports the government's priority of stabilizing health costs, fiscal sustainability, and a balanced budget.

Core Business Areas

The Emergency Measures Organization administers its programs of emergency preparedness, notification and response through five core business areas. The programs within these business areas all ensure that the response to a wide range of emergencies is prompt and coordinated, whether the emergency impacts a single individual, a community, the entire province, or the Atlantic Region.

1. Integrated Emergency Preparedness

The role of EMO is to ensure that an integrated and effective emergency preparedness platform exists across the province. EMO encourages groups of municipalities to participate collectively, thus optimizing the deployment of resources across a region of the province. The province's Emergency Measures Act requires all municipalities to have an emergency coordinator and an emergency plan approved by the minister. EMO is responsible for ensuring that all plans meet a minimum acceptable standard and that plans of adjacent municipal units are complementary in nature.

Through its three field offices, EMO reviews and evaluates each plan biannually and produces a report card for the minister and for each municipal council.

This business area contributes to the ability of municipalities and the public sector to prepare themselves to manage local emergencies, thereby supporting an agenda of responsible, accountable government while reducing the province's potential financial exposure.

The following programs are included within the Integrated Emergency Preparedness business area:

- **Municipal Planning Review/ Consultation.** Three EMO (NS) regional emergency management staff maintain regular contact with all 55 municipal governments to review plans and to provide advice with respect to the compliance of the plans with the Emergency Measures Act.
- **Joint Emergency Preparedness Program (JEPP).** JEPP is a $200,000 federal government 50 per cent cost-sharing program that attempts to establish a reasonably uniform level of emergency planning across the country through cost-sharing for training and education, special equipment acquisitions, and development of regional emergency plans.
- **Priority Access to Dial Tone (PAD).** In the aftermath of an emergency, conventional telephone communications systems tend to become overloaded. Restoration occurs in phases, and it is important that emergency telephone numbers be restored as a priority over non-emergency numbers. EMO coordinates the collection of information and then provides the telephone companies with direction on which telephone numbers need the highest level of protection during a telephone switch overload.
- **Atlantic Co-operation in Major Emergencies Agreement.** The four Atlantic Premiers have signed an agreement to provide interprovincial access to resources in the event of a major emergency.
- **International Emergency Management Compact:** This mutual aid agreement provides for provision of resources between the eastern provinces and the New England states in the event of a major emergency.
- **Federal/Provincial Liaison Program.** This program establishes a cost-shared staff position within EMO (NS) charged with the responsibility of coordinating planning arrangements between Nova Scotia and Canada.
- **Homes for Special Care Emergency Planning.** EMO staff provide advice respecting emergency plans and exercises for the homes for special care in Nova Scotia.

2. Emergency Management Training

EMO trains municipal, provincial, and private-sector emergency managers to design and implement emergency plans that contribute to their ability to provide a prompt and coordinated response to a state of emergency. This training contributes to the ability of municipalities to respond to local emergencies, thereby supporting an agenda of responsible, accountable government, while reducing the province's financial exposure, thereby supporting the government's goals related to fiscal stability.

The following training programs are included in this business area:

- **Basic Emergency Preparedness.** This is an entry-level program including obligations under the Act, emergency plan development and testing. It is directed at persons responsible for planning and managing emergency outcomes.
- **Mayors and Elected Officials.** This program educates municipal councils and mayors with respect to the role of EMO (NS), municipal obligations under the Emergency Measures Act, and the availability of federal government financial programs.
- **Emergency Operations Centre.** This program is directed at management-level personnel within the public and private sectors and incorporates the importance of design, structure, and operational procedures for a central facility from which emergency operations are conducted.
- **Emergency Site Management.** This program, for actual emergency responders, enhances the ability to direct, control, and coordinate joint operations at an emergency site.
- **Evacuation Management**- One of EMO's principal roles during an emergency is to remove people from harm's way and look after them. This course teaches the essential theory, practice, and realities of evacuation planning.
- **Exercise Design.** One of EMO's governing philosophies is that an emergency plan is not complete until it has been tested using an actual emergency exercise. This course, directed at municipal, provincial, and private-sector emergency planners, is a basic "how to" with respect to designing, writing, conducting, and evaluating an emergency exercise.

- **Atlantic Training Strategy.** Emergencies do not respect provincial boundaries. To manage an interprovincial emergency, common skill sets and knowledge are essential. Under the Atlantic Co-operation in Emergencies Agreement, the four Atlantic provinces collaborate on course design, training, delivery, and strategic planning.
- **Distance Education.** This program makes advanced education in emergency planning accessible to those who are isolated for reasons of remoteness, financial limitation, or scheduling.

3. 911 Emergency Reporting Service

This business area exists to ensure that all Nova Scotians have equal access to the ability to report emergencies and to receive prompt assistance for the protection of their safety and security. EMO (NS) sets standards and policies that ensure that callers receive the same high quality of 911 service no matter where they are in the province. This business area contributes to the EMO (NS) mission statement to ensure the safety and security of Nova Scotians and their property by providing for a prompt and coordinated response to an emergency. This business area also supports the government priorities of fiscal sustainability and a balanced budget, because by enabling prompt reporting of an emergency, response time is reduced and so is the cost of the emergency in terms of response costs, property damage, and lives.

There are four programs in the 911 emergency reporting service business area:

1. **Operations.** EMO provides call taking equipment, standards and policy, and conducts regular quality assurance monitoring within the province's six 911 centres.
2. **Call Taker Training.** 911 call takers are provided with training in equipment use and protocols, as well as in strategic areas of crisis communications, suicide prevention, and domestic violence intervention.
3. **Public Education.** Schools, seniors, and other target audiences are provided with information on the effective use and availability of 911 service.
4. **Civic Addressing.** EMO coordinates the input of civic address data from more than 55 municipal units across the province to the telephone company-owned 911 database. The Department of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations is building a digitized civic address database. EMO is collaborating in this venture by supplying the necessary civic address data, and as a consequence, 911 call takers will eventually have access to digitized map data while they are speaking with callers who have an emergency.

4. Integrated Emergency Response

Resources do not magically appear in response to an emergency. Very precise and meticulous arrangements need to be worked out in advance to ensure that the right resources are available. Frequently, resources that are not available in one municipal unit are available in another, and through this business area the resources are identified, and arrangements are made in advance to make them available in the event of an emergency. This business area supports an agenda of responsible and accountable government by coordinating response to an emergency through effective communications, prearranged mutual aid agreements, and established networking protocols.

Through the delivery of the following strategic programs, EMO delivers an integrated provincial network of incident reporting, internal and external communications, public information release, emergency response, and post-incident debriefing.

- **Departmental Emergency Preparedness Officer Program.** Each provincial department, agency, board, and commission has an emergency planning officer, and an alternate, whose role it is to coordinate the department's response and service delivery in the event of an emergency. EMO is the central training and coordination agency that brings all these individuals and resources together in one place so that response to emergencies proceeds in a prompt and coordinated fashion.

- **Emergency Operations Centre.** Nova Scotia and Canada share a joint emergency operations centre (JEOC) housed within EMO headquarters in Dartmouth. This is where senior decision makers gather when managing an emergency response, to evaluate information and make operational decisions on a consensus basis during an emergency.

- **Emergency Public Information.** In co-operation with Communications Nova Scotia, EMO (NS) has developed an emergency public information plan to support the province's emergency management system.

- **Standby Officer Program.** EMO maintains an "on call "program to ensure that someone is available on a 24-hour basis from the Government of Nova Scotia to accept notification and to initiate a response to an emergency.

- **Emergency Communications.** EMO (NS) works with the government departments responsible for radio systems to ensure that effective emergency communications are always available. EMO (NS) also has developed agreements with the province's amateur radio community and commercial radio stations to provide communications support.

- **Nova Scotia Emergency Management Manual.** EMO is responsible for developing and maintaining the provincial government emergency plan that establishes the framework under which responsibilities are assigned, operational information is gathered, and decisions are made.

5. Nova Scotia Ground Search and Rescue

Search and rescue operations contribute to EMO's mission in the sense that a coordinated response to an emergency must include the ability to quickly locate persons who are missing or unaccounted for. Nova Scotia has been recognized as a national leader for its well-organized and trained volunteer Ground Search and Rescue (GSAR) service. Each year more than 1,600 volunteers from 24 teams conduct approximately 70 searches for lost people. EMO (NS) provides financial and administrative support to this service.

This business area includes the following programs:

- **Expense Reimbursement.** EMO pays for travel costs for volunteers from home to the search site, for annual workshops and training, and for the replacement of certain pieces of equipment lost or damaged during a search.
- **Operating Grants.** EMO provides an annual team operating grant of $1,000 and a grant of the same value to the Nova Scotia Ground Search and Rescue Association to which the teams belong.
- **Training Assistance.** EMO provides its training officer, on an as-required basis, to assist teams in the development of training programs.
- **Media Management Assistance.** EMO provides the services of its communications officer, on an as-required basis, to assist in developing a competent media relations capability within the teams.

Priorities for 2003–2004

1. Integrated Emergency Preparedness

To advance the goal of maintaining the safety and security of Nova Scotians by improving the province's capability to respond and increasing the ability of municipalities and industries to effectively manage local emergencies , while reducing the province's financial exposure in the aftermath of emergencies, EMO (NS) will:

- implement a provincial government corporate emergency planning strategy
- pilot test the Incident Command System within municipal emergency operations
- participate with the federal government in national strategies to mitigate the effect of natural disasters and to assure the protection of critical infrastructure
- implement a program to improve and encourage public participation in emergency preparedness.

2. Emergency Management Training

To advance the goal of increasing the ability of municipalities and industries to effectively manage local emergencies, EMO (NS) will

- deliver a comprehensive program of emergency management across Nova Scotia, including programs in Basic Emergency Preparedness, Emergency Operations Centre Management, and Emergency Site Management
- convene an annual in-service training conference for 55 municipal emergency measures coordinators
- facilitate provincial student attendance in advanced emergency management training and education at the Canadian Emergency Preparedness College in Ottawa
- participate in ongoing Atlantic provinces' training initiatives under the Atlantic Co-operation in Emergencies Agreement.

3. 911 Reporting service

To advance the goal of increasing the speed and efficiency with which callers to 911 receive emergency assistance, EMO (NS) will:

- implement the recommendations of a December 2002 audit related to improvements in equipment, training and procedures
- pilot test the delivery of provincially completed digital civic address mapping to a 911 centre
- expand the existing 911 call-taker training program to include a significantly greater crisis communications component and suicide prevention program and deliver the expanded program to 50 per cent of call takers
- in co-operation with the Department of Transportation and Public Works, expand its present distance marker program to assist cellular phone users in pinpointing their location for 911 call takers; in 2003–04, distance markers will be erected on Highway 104 from the New Brunswick border to Port Hastings.

4. Integrated Emergency Response

To advance the goal of maintaining the safety and security of Nova Scotians by improving the province's capability to respond and of increasing the ability of municipalities and industries to effectively manage local emergencies, while reducing the province's financial exposure in the aftermath of emergencies, EMO (NS) will undertake the following:

- develop and implement a set of standard operating procedures for the province's Emergency Operations Centre and provide training to the province's departmental emergency preparedness officers with respect to standard operating procedures for the province's Emergency Operations Centre
- in co-operation with the Office of the Fire Marshal, administers a federal government cost-shared assistance program directed at improving the ability of municipalities to respond to hazardous materials spills and chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear incidents
- encourage and facilitate the development of regional emergency measures organizations across Nova Scotia.

5. Ground Search and Rescue

To advance the goal of providing a prompt and coordinated response to an emergency, EMO (NS) will

- create a memorandum of understanding with Parks Canada and with municipal police for GSAR expenditures (the lack of an actual written memorandum of understanding creates gaps in expectations when search teams are engaged in searches at the request of the police, causing delays in expense reimbursement, and has the potential to erode the quality of the working relationship)
- improve external communications from GSAR teams to the public, through the delivery of a media management workshop by the EMO public information officer
- improve GSAR effectiveness by increasing the training opportunities for volunteers by providing financial support and training expertise.

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Review office

Mission

To review decisions of public bodies relating to applications for access to records, in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and the Municipal Government Act.

Strategic Goals

- To seek an amendment to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act to provide the Review Officer with the explicit mandate to investigate and report on privacy complaints.
- To further support the government's goal of openness and accountability to work to increase the public's awareness of its access and privacy rights through public speaking engagements.

Core Business Areas

1. To receive requests for review from individuals with respect to decisions of public bodies in response to applications for access to information and to make recommendations to public bodies.
2. To attempt mediation to resolve complaints.
3. To assist in resolving privacy complaints.

Priorities for 2003–2004

- To seek an amendment to the act to provide the Review Officer with the explicit mandate to investigate and report on privacy complaints.
- To ensure timely responses to "requests for review" and privacy queries.

Human Rights Commission

Mission

To reduce individual and systemic discrimination in support of a society characterized by equality.

We value:

- Respect and dignity, through words and actions in relation to all members of the public
- Diversity, recognizing that everyone can contribute to our society
- Understanding, through education as a focal point for change
- Credibility, in being seen as independent and truly autonomous from government
- Integrity, in practising what we preach and in serving as a model for government, other agencies, and the private sector.

Strategic Goals

Goals for the commission in 2003–04 are:

- To continue to promote the commission as a credible and effective organization through better program delivery, improved service to the public, and enhanced partnerships with other organizations.
- To promote efficient and effective resolutions to complaints of discrimination.
- To help foster the development of a more equitable society and fair workplaces by pro- actively addressing discrimination in all its forms.

While the commission is independent of government, its goals for 2003–04 mirror provincial government goals by seeking to

- provide responsible, accountable service to the public
- create conditions that help the economy grow (by enabling all Nova Scotians to participate in the economic and social life of the province)
- foster an environment that allows and encourages Nova Scotians to work, raise families, and stay in Nova Scotia.

The commission's strategic goals for the 2003–04 fiscal year also reflect the following priorities as set out by the provincial government:

- achieving fiscal stability
- growing the economy (by enabling all Nova Scotians to participate in the economic and social life of the province)
- fostering a professional public service

Core Business Areas

1. Resolution of Complaints of Discrimination

- Delivers programs collaboratively through the Investigation and Compliance and Race Relations and Affirmative Action divisions..
- Attempts early interventions to resolve disputes before they become formal complaints of discrimination.
- Investigates complaints of discrimination (approximately 250 active files in 2002–03) and recommends to the commissioners options for resolution.
- Identifies emerging issues and targets skill development for commission staff in response.
- Provides a range of dispute resolution services.

2. Public Education and Outreach

- Raises awareness of human rights issues and encourages peace, harmony, and respect for all Nova Scotians.
- Involves the staff of the Race Relations and Affirmative Action and Investigation and Compliance divisions and the Office of the Director and CEO.
- Develops and maintains effective links with government, business, the legal community, schools, agencies, and community groups to raise awareness of human rights issues and compliance with the Human Rights Act.
- Fosters social research on human rights issues and topics.
- Provides education and training programs in workplaces, schools, and other settings.
- Ensures cost-recovery in service delivery, wherever possible.
- Promotes opportunities for all Nova Scotians by working with employers to develop agreements that promote diversity in hiring and promotion.

Priorities for 2003–2004

The commission has identified the following priorities for 2003–04:

1. Resolution of Complaints of Discrimination

- In co-operation with Mi'kmaq and other Aboriginal communities, develop an Aboriginal action plan to improve the services the commission offers to these communities, particularly through the development of effective models of dispute resolution.

- Implement a new dispute resolution policy to encourage the early settlement of complaints in keeping with the recommendations from the organizational review.
- Continue development of best practices to address systemic discrimination.
- Improve the complaint process by implementing the recommendations from the organizational review.
- Pursue more effective methods of tracking case management.
- Develop a Code of Ethics for commission staff.

2. Public Education and Outreach

- Continue involvement with government, institutional, and community partners to further develop linkages and forums for discussion and change; this includes oral presentations on trends and concerns to government and opposition caucuses in conjunction with the filing of the commission's annual report.
- Develop a comprehensive communications plan for 2003 events and activities.
- Continue communication initiatives aimed at increasing the commission's public profile and informing the public about changes resulting from the organizational review.
- Continue policy research and development, in partnership with external organizations, in emerging areas of human rights, including undertaking special projects aimed at mental health consumers as specified in the settlement agreement for Archibald Kaiser v. Executive Council of Nova Scotia.
- Promote the commission as a source of information and resources on human rights and compliance issues under the Act for employers and employees in the public, private, educational, and not-for-profit sectors.

Intergovernmental Affairs

Mission

To provide leadership in the development of corporate strategies for Nova Scotia's relations with other governments.

Strategic Goals

These are the goals of the agency responsible for intergovernmental relations, which by their nature support and advance the government's priorities of health care: stabilize funding and improve service availability and quality; education: improve the quality of education and the learning environment; economy, jobs, and growth: take advantage of economic opportunities to maximize jobs and growth.

- Preserving and promoting the interests of Nova Scotia in its relations and negotiations with other governments in Canada and abroad.
- Promoting and fostering co-operation between the provinces of Atlantic Canada in development of policy and delivery of services.
- Providing accurate and timely information in regards to the policies and initiatives of other governments that affect Nova Scotia to decision makers responsible for advancing the government's core priorities.

Core Business Areas

1. Coordinate the overall intergovernmental strategy of the Nova Scotia government, to ensure a corporate approach to other governments.
2. Build on regional alliances to promote issues of fairness for Nova Scotians and Atlantic Canadians and promote regional programs and services that benefit citizens.
3. Expand Nova Scotia's international linkages to support and promote Nova Scotia's interests abroad.
4. Increase awareness and understanding, both within the Nova Scotia government and in other governments, of this province's position relative to key intergovernmental issues and promote fairness to Nova Scotia in negotiations with the Government of Canada and other governments.

Priorities

1. Coordinate the overall intergovernmental strategy of the Nova Scotia government to ensure a corporate approach to other governments

- Through consultation with line departments, promote the identification of intergovernmental priorities and of opportunities for federal-provincial and interprovincial co-operation.
- Gather intelligence and develop central agency expertise by monitoring federal and other provincial developments to ensure that the Nova Scotia government can act in a proactive fashion.
- Provide strategic policy advice and support to ministers and in particular the Premier as he advances Nova Scotia's priority agenda at First Ministers' Meetings, Annual Premiers' Conferences, and other key intergovernmental meetings.
- Coordinate the development of this province's intergovernmental and negotiating positions and provide operational and strategic policy support for negotiations with other federal-provincial-territorial governments.

2. Build on regional alliances to promote issues of fairness for Nova Scotians and Atlantic Canadians and promote regional programs and services that benefit citizens

- Identify areas where a united Atlantic position towards Ottawa can yield policy and material benefits and work with Atlantic officials to develop this position for Premiers' approval.
- Coordinate implementation of the Atlantic Action Plan, continue to identify areas where regional co-operation can yield economies of scale and more efficient delivery of services to Nova Scotians, and work with Atlantic officials to develop program proposals for Premiers' approval.
- Provide strategic advice and support to the Premier for and during meetings of the Council of Atlantic Premiers, the Council of Maritime Premiers, and the New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers.

3. Expand Nova Scotia's international linkages to support and promote Nova Scotia's interests abroad

- Ensure that Nova Scotia's interests are fairly considered in the development of solutions to transborder irritants, security and other issues.
- Support Nova Scotia's trade and investment strategies ensuring that Nova Scotia departments and agencies are kept abreast of international ideas, trends and multilateral obligations, and of information gathered from international organizations.
- Co-arrange/manage high-level diplomatic and trade/investment promotion visits and missions, and ensure that the Premier is fully briefed to participate in them and for visits from foreign dignitaries.
- Represent Nova Scotia's interests and positions, ensuring that these are known by various governments including foreign representatives accredited to Canada.

4. Increase awareness and understanding, both within the Nova Scotia government and in other governments, of this province's position relative to key intergovernmental issues and to promote fairness to Nova Scotia in negotiations with the Government of Canada and other governments

- Ensure that the Nova Scotian perspective is considered in external forums such as the Annual Premiers Conference and in the development of federal policy by working with the Intergovernmental Affairs section of the Privy Council Office, and with other federal agencies and departments in Ottawa and in the Atlantic region (e.g., Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade).
- Maintain and expand the network of federal, provincial and territorial contacts in Intergovernmental Affairs and other departments so as to exchange information and policy positions.

- Maintain regular contact with line departments respecting their intergovernmental activity, and keep them abreast of issues involving other governments and Intergovernmental Affairs activities.
- Provide ministers and agencies with advice and support regarding trade agreements, negotiations, and disputes.

Office of Economic Development

Mission

The Office of Economic Development (OED) is the focal point within the provincial government for advancing government's economic, technology, and innovation agendas. The Office of Economic Development researches, develops, and advances corporate policies and strategies, leads strategic initiatives, and provides advice to government leading to a productive and sustainable economy.

Strategic Goals

- To work collaboratively—across government departments, throughout the broader public sector, and with communities and business partners—to build a thriving economy.
- To strengthen leadership and coordination of strategies, policies, and initiatives in the key areas identified in *Opportunities for Prosperity* to maximize the benefits of government's work in economic development, technology, and innovation.
- To support regional economic development in partnership with provincial and community development organizations and local governments.
- To guide and leverage government's investments in the application of technology and information in support of efficient government and accessible, quality service.

Core Business Areas

As the hub of a set of organizations working on economic development, innovation, and technology issues, the Office of Economic Development manages the overall system agenda. The Office of Economic Development derives its own five core business areas from the key government policy documents noted above.

The Office of Economic Development's fundamental business is leadership of the province's economic development, innovation, and technology support systems. The Office of Economic Development leads the provincial government's work on the following five core business areas, in close coordination with others:

1. Economic Development, Leadership and Coordination
2. Business climate
3. Technology and information management
4. Innovation
5. Regional capacity

The Office of Economic Development also collaborates with other organizations, both federal and provincial, on issues related to labour force development, trade and investment, and industrial benefits, leading some aspects of the work. In addition, the Office of Economic Development plays a primarily supportive role in issues related to infrastructure, foundation industries, and growth sectors.

The Office of Economic Development's engagement in all of the above issues will include staff as required from the four teams within the Office of Economic Development: Decision Support, Policies and Strategies, Strategic Initiatives, and Community and Regional Development.

Decision Support

- provides research, evaluation, and performance-measurement support to all aspects of the economic development, innovation, and technology system.

Policies and Strategies

- provides research, analysis, leadership, and support for the development processes underpinning implementation of government's projects and initiatives in economic development, innovation, and technology policy and strategy development.

Strategic Initiatives

- provides leadership, planning, management, and other support to strategic initiatives that advance the economic development, innovation, and technology system's agenda.
- provides project integration and management support to initiatives approved through the corporate planning process.
- supports a coordinated and integrated approach to project management across the system.

Community and Rural Development

- supports community leadership for effective regional development throughout the province by providing information, advice, and resources to provincial, regional, and local organizations, to local governments, and to the general business community.
- collects and distributes information and intelligence from these organizations for the Office of Economic Development and its agencies.

Priorities for 2003–2004

1. Leadership and Coordination

Provide leadership and coordination in economic development, innovation, and technology. Working closely with its implementing agencies and with other provincial departments working on economic development-related issues, the Office of Economic Development's priorities in this area for 2003–04 are as follows:

- System coordination—support the meetings that bring together key players in the economic development, innovation, and technology system.
- The Office of Economic Development's role definition and development—work with the Office of Economic Development staff and with implementation agencies to broaden the understanding of the Office of Economic Development's new role.
- *Opportunities for Prosperity* oversight—produce the 2003 annual review of progress and revisit and validate *Opportunities for Prosperity* for 2004–05.
- SAP Public Sector Strategy—oversee the strategy for the implementation of SAP, the province's enterprise resource planning tool, within the public sector.

2. Business Climate

The Office of Economic Development will work closely with implementing agencies and other related provincial and federal departments to develop the conditions to encourage the private sector to expand and innovate. The Office of Economic Development will ensure that policy is in place. Other organizations will take primary responsibility for implementing policies. The Office of Economic Development's 2003–04 priorities are as follows:

- Improve the general business climate—complete the annual update of the Business Climate Index and analyse the results to identify action opportunities.
- Immigration—implement the Provincial Nominee Program.

3. Technology and Information Management

Working with government departments and public-sector agencies, the Office of Economic Development will seek opportunities for coordination, collaboration, and partnership. The Office of Economic Development will seek to enable the optimization of the efficiency and effectiveness of government operations, supported by cost-effective and innovative use of technology and information.

- Information Management Framework—develop a multi-phased corporate Information Management Strategy and Framework for government-held information. Phase 1 is expected to be completed during fiscal year 2003–04.
- E-government framework strategy development process—develop a strategy and recommendations for implementing a framework supporting the deployment of e-government services.
- Data Centre Service Project—facilitate the process for implementing a replacement contract for Government of Nova Scotia Data Centre services by September 2003.

4. Innovation

Working with partners from various sectors, the Office of Economic Development will expand provincial innovation capacity by building up the linkages and infrastructure of the innovation systems that bind Nova Scotian innovators with public, private, and academic innovation assets. The Office of Economic Development's 2003–04 priority in this area is:

- Implementation of the Innovative Nova Scotia policy/strategic direction—launch *Innovative Nova Scotia* publicly to provide emphasis and coordinated direction for Province of Nova Scotia innovation activity.

5. Regional Capacity

Working with federal and municipal governments and community-based agencies and building on progress made in recent years, the Office of Economic Development will work to expand community capacity to identify and meet development challenges. The Office of Economic Development will encourage and reward community initiative. It will support regional efforts based on community assets and strengths. A key challenge is to develop policy that includes groups and citizens historically excluded from these processes. The Office of Economic Development's priorities in this area for 2003–04 are as follows:

- Community Development Policy—finalize and implement the Community Development Policy, begun in 2002–03. Develop an action plan and initiate implementation.
- Regional development planning—create and implement regional development strategies with partners and support regional development organizations, particularly in communities in transition.
- Community Access Program—ensure that C@P sites continue to evolve to meet the needs of their communities as an integrated function of community and rural development infrastructure.

Office of Health Promotion

Mission

To facilitate communication, co-operation, and collaboration and action among individuals, organizations, sectors, and government departments to achieve a healthier population.

Strategic Goals

The Office of Health Promotion has four strategic goals for 2003–04:

- Strengthen community action to promote health.
- Develop personal skills.
- Create supportive environments.
- Reorient services to support population health.

The Office of Health Promotion will seek to:

- Develop and maintain strong connections to other government departments, advocacy organizations, and other community-based partners.
- Increase public profile and focus on health, health promotion and improving health determinants
- Increase intersectoral focus on healthy communities, chronic disease prevention initiative, etc.
- Support and enhance efforts at community capacity building.

Core Business Areas

The Office of Health Promotion has four core business areas:

1. Health Promotion and Disease/Injury Prevention

The office works in partnership with stakeholders, communities, families, and individuals to prevent illness, protect and promote health, and achieve well-being. Activities may be directed at an entire population, at priority sub-populations, or in some circumstances, at individuals.

2. Tobacco Reduction

The office works in partnership with many other groups to implement a comprehensive tobacco strategy for Nova Scotia. Elements include taxation, legislation, treatment/cessation programs, community-based programming, youth smoking prevention initiatives, media awareness, and evaluation. The provincial Tobacco Access Act and federal Tobacco Act are enforced through ongoing education and support in the community. Aspects of enforcement include retailer visits, signage and education.

3. Addiction and Problem Gambling

The office works with provincial- and community-level groups and organizations on addiction prevention and community education (in schools, workplaces, and communities) and on problem gambling (specialized services including prevention and education)

4. Physical Fitness, Recreation and Sport

Building on the past success of the Sport and Recreation Commission, the office works with others to develop, encourage, establish, coordinate, implement, and promote sport and recreational programs and services.

Priorities for 2003–2004

1. Health Promotion

Health promotion policy can combine diverse, yet complementary approaches to legislation, fiscal measures, taxation, and organizational change. Coordinated action can result in the adoption of healthy public policies in both the health and non-health sectors. Initiatives for 2003–04 include the following:

- Together with partners, and through the leadership of the Provincial Breastfeeding Committee, develop policy recommendations for Nova Scotia on breastfeeding and the Baby Friendly Initiative (BFI). The policy recommendations will facilitate the creation of conditions in which all women will be supported in their efforts to breastfeed their babies.
- Through representation on the Nova Scotia Nutrition Council's Food Security Steering Committee, influence policy to improve food security among Nova Scotians.
- Together with partners, participate in the development of a Healthy Eating Strategy within the overall context of the Chronic Disease Prevention Strategy (currently under way).
- As a member of the Children and Youth Action Committee, publish a report on indicators of the well-being of children and youth in Nova Scotia.
- Together with partners, implement a school food survey that will provide information to inform program and policy development.

2. Tobacco Reduction

The Office of Health Promotion works in partnership with many other groups to implement a comprehensive tobacco strategy for Nova Scotia. Elements include taxation, legislation, treatment/ cessation programs, community-based programming, youth smoking prevention initiatives, media awareness, and evaluation.

In the past, national data indicated that the youth smoking rate in Canada had declined, while youth smoking in Nova Scotia had increased. More recently, two surveys (one national and one provincial) suggest that youth smoking rates in Nova Scotia are decreasing. For example, we are encouraged by the results of the 2002 Nova Scotia Student Drug Use Survey, released in November, which indicates a significant reduction in student tobacco use. Between 1998 and 2002 the smoking rate among junior and senior high school students dropped from 36 per cent to 23 per cent. As positive as this news is, much remains to be done.

- **Taxation.** Make recommendations to government concerning the taxation of tobacco and its effect on smoking rates, according to provincial and national trends.
- **Legislation.** Coordinate enforcement of the Smoke-free Places Act, including ongoing liaison with enforcement agencies, management 1-800 complaint/information line, and monitoring of inspection activity.
- **Treatment/Cessation.** Provide support to new Addiction Services nicotine treatment staff, including coordination of district training opportunities, and monitor pilot evaluation of treatment approaches using a combination of counselling and pharmacological cessation aids. The pilot will generate funding recommendations for coverage of pharmacological cessation aids under the Tobacco Strategy.
- **Community-based Programs.** Provide support to new Public Health Services staff (Tobacco Coordinators) to facilitate development of district tobacco strategies and facilitate development of standards for community-based tobacco programs.
- **Youth Prevention.** Produce school-based tobacco prevention resources, including curriculum, school policy guidelines, and youth cessation programs, and provide ongoing enforcement of the Tobacco Access Act and the Tobacco Act.

- **Media/Public Awareness.** Develop and implement the second year of the three-year provincial tobacco control public awareness campaign. Initiatives for 2003–04 include an evaluation of TV ads, enhancements to the <sickofsmoke.com> Web site, media training for district tobacco staff, launch of high school media programs, and coordination of a human resource/workplace tobacco awareness program.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation.** Produce an annual report highlighting progress on the Tobacco Strategy.

3. Addiction and Problem Gambling

- **Enhanced Rural Women and Youth Addiction Services.** Provide support to new Addiction Services field staff in the Districts to reduce barriers to service, highlighting accessibility and community-based prevention, intervention, and treatment services.
- **Addiction Service Standards.** Continue to develop and implement operational definitions, objectives, and measurements for key services as a framework for improving access to, and delivery of, addiction services throughout Nova Scotia.
- **Best Practices.** Write and distribute a series of best-practices documents for each service area (Withdrawal Management, Addiction Education Program, Prevention and Community Education etc.), for use by management and staff in Addiction Services. This, in conjunction with improved addiction services standards, will help ensure delivery of consistent, high-quality services across the province.
- **Addiction Services Information System (StatIS).** Redesign StatIS, a province-wide client information system for tracking and monitoring client activity and patterns, to support Department of Health and district health authority (DHA) objectives and to accommodate federal and provincial reporting requirements.
- **Enhanced Nicotine Treatment.** Addiction Services, both centrally and in the DHA's throughout the province, continues to work with and actively support the department's strategic directions related to nicotine.

- **Outcome Monitoring System.** The process for monitoring addiction-specific outcomes has been established throughout the province. The questionnaire that will be utilized for the one-year follow-up is being finalized by a committee of experienced evaluators and programmers.
- **Strategic Plan for Problem Gambling.** A province-wide plan, predicated upon the need for core service components in all districts and based upon WHO models and concepts, is being implemented. Existing services, resources, and service delivery gaps are being identified.
- **Nova Scotia Gambling Prevalence Study.** Manage the survey process and report the findings of this approved study, which is intended to establish the nature and extent of problem gambling in Nova Scotia.
- **Gambling Health Promotion and Intervention.** Develop materials, based directly upon VLT studies and clinical experience, for dissemination to a number of target-specific populations to counteract well-established myths and address gambling-related risks.

4. Physical Fitness, Recreation and Sport

Building on the past success of the Sport and Recreation Commission, the Office of Health Promotion works with others to develop, encourage, establish, coordinate, implement, and promote sport, recreational, fitness, and outdoor programs and services.

There are various areas in which it is critical for the Office of Health Promotion to achieve results in order to improve the health of Nova Scotians. Among them are leadership and facility development, safe environments, and the research and information required to foster a physically active culture.

The Office of Health Promotion provides policies, programs, and services in three areas:

- development and support of recreation and sport organizations, public agencies, and communities
- promotion and support of active healthy lifestyles
- quality, safe, and equitable sport and recreation opportunities and experiences
- support and promote volunteers in leadership positions in sport and recreation

- support and encourage the development of facilities and infrastructure for sport and recreation
- work with the Department of Education and other stakeholders to facilitate physical fitness and recreation in schools
- implement the Active Kids/Healthy Kids strategy for physical activity for children and youth

Office of the Ombudsman

Mission

To ensure that the concerns of all citizens—including youth in the care and custody of the municipal and provincial governments—regarding principles of administrative fairness, good governance, and natural justice in the delivery of municipal and provincial public services are addressed through an independent, objective review mechanism.

Strategic Goals

In accomplishing its mission, the Office of the Ombudsman contributes to the Government's priority of fulfilling its role of providing responsible, accountable government.

In order to accomplish its mission, the Office of the Ombudsman has set the following goals for 2003–04:

- To maintain citizens' access, including youth in the care and custody of the municipal and provincial governments, to an independent, objective review mechanism of complaints against government with respect to administrative fairness.
- To increase citizens' awareness, including youth in the care and custody of the municipal and provincial governments, of their right to access an independent review/complaint mechanism by advising stakeholders, elected officials, and public service employees of the role of the Office of the Ombudsman.
- To maintain and ensure that all complaints are investigated objectively and thoroughly, in a confidential and timely manner, while ensuring administrative fairness and good governance by a responsible and accountable government.

Although the Office of the Ombudsman is independent of the provincial government, its goals for 2003–04 mirror identified government goals by seeking to:

- provide for responsive, efficient, and effective service to the public at a sustainable cost
- continue to address issues of administrative fairness, good governance, and natural justice, to ensure government responsibility and accountability
- continuously provide staff with the education, skills, and knowledge about current practices, policies, and procedures
- educate the public service on the principles of administrative fairness and good governance to ensure a more efficient and professional public service.

Core Business Areas

1. Complaints Resolution/Investigation

- Receive and investigate complaints filed by citizens, including youth in the care and custody of municipal and provincial governments, against provincial and municipal government departments, agencies, boards, and commissions.

2. Information Sharing

- Advise citizens and provide a voice for children and youth in care and custody of municipal and provincial governments of their right to access internal departmental and external complaint mechanisms and of their right to access the independent, impartial complaint mechanisms of the Office of the Ombudsman.

3. Operational Issues

- Recommend and monitor amendments to policies, procedures, and legislation that adhere to the principles of administrative fairness for citizens, including youth in the care and custody of municipal and provincial governments. Through the recommending and monitoring component, the Office of the Ombudsman advises and educates citizens, including youth in the care and custody of municipal and provincial governments, elected officials, and employees of the public service, of the principles of administrative fairness and good governance.

Priorities for 2003–2004

The priorities set out in this business plan were developed based on a budget allocation of $802,000 for the 2003–04 fiscal year.

1. Complaints Resolution/Investigation

- Provide a complaint resolution process that ensures that all complaints filed by citizens, including youth in the care and custody of municipal and provincial governments, are investigated professionally, objectively, thoroughly, and in a confidential and timely manner.
  - review and monitor, on a regular basis, the complaint resolution process for efficiency and effectiveness in meeting client needs and/or expectations
  - continue to implement written guidelines to diminish conflict of interest while investigating complaints involving the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission during the dual appointment of the CEO of the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission as Ombudsman
  - develop and implement a communication strategy to introduce the complaints resolution process developed for youth in care of the province
  - implement delivery of the complaints resolution process developed for youth in care of the province
  - develop mechanisms to ensure that required upgrades are identified for case-management systems (CHAOS and YODA) to ensure that they continue to be fully utilized
  - complete and distribute an orientation package to ensure that all staff are educated on the provincial government's Code of Conduct for employees, with continued emphasis on the importance of practising confidentiality at all times
  - request and participate in information sessions offered by various government departments to further enhance staff's knowledge and understanding of the programs and their administration within government.

2. Information Sharing

- Continue to undertake a more proactive role through educating and increasing the awareness of citizens, children, youth, elected officials, and employees of the public service of the right to access the Ombudsman's independent, objective review/ complaint resolution mechanism and of the principles of administrative fairness and good governance.
  - continue to provide citizens, including youth in the care and custody of municipal and provincial governments, with access to the Ombudsman's toll-free inquiry lines
  - conduct speaking engagements, information and training sessions, focus groups, audits, and regular site visits for citizens, including youth in the care and custody of municipal and provincial governments, elected officials, and employees of the public service on the role and mandate of the Office of the Ombudsman
  - continue developing and implementing a communication strategy to ensure that the public and municipal and provincial employees are knowledgeable about the Office of the Ombudsman
  - maintain the current staffing level and expertise of employees responsible for the administration of the Ombudsman Act
  - continuously review and monitor the complaint resolution process for efficiency and effectiveness in meeting client needs and/or expectations.

3. Operational Issues

Provide a service that includes a proactive role while maintaining independence from government to ensure public confidence in our investigations.

- communicate to government officials the opportunity to access through the Office of the Ombudsman presentations and reviews of internal polices and procedures to provide input on administrative fairness and good governance in the delivery of government programs and services

- continue to implement written guidelines to diminish conflict of interest while investigating complaints involving the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission during the dual appointment of the Director and CEO of the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission as Ombudsman
- implement the delivery of the complaints resolution process developed for youth in care of the province.

Public Prosecution Service

Mission

To seek justice and serve the public interest by performing prosecution duties with fairness, professionalism, and integrity.

Strategic Goals

In accomplishing its mission, the Public Prosecution Service contributes to the government's priority of fulfilling its social responsibility of providing for public safety.

In order to accomplish its mission, the Public Prosecution Service has set the following goals:

- Providing a Public Prosecution Service that reflects excellence, dedication to public service, and high ethical standards.
- Providing a Public Prosecution Service that identifies and manages the resources required to carry out its mission.
- Providing a Public Prosecution Service that reflects the application of best business practices consistent with providing a high-quality service.
- Providing, within the Public Prosecution Service, an environment that allows for the independent exercise of prosecutorial discretion.
- Providing a Public Prosecution Service that is reflective of the community it serves.

Core Business Areas

1. Represent the Crown in the conduct of criminal and quasi-criminal matters before all levels of court.
2. Represent the Crown in the conduct of criminal and quasi-criminal appeals before all levels of courts.
3. Provide legal advice and assistance to the police and provincial law enforcement officers at their request.
4. Participate in the development of criminal law and criminal prosecutions policy.

Priorities for 2003–2004

The priorities for the first three core business areas of the service overlap significantly and thus are presented as a group.

1. Represent the Crown in the conduct of criminal and quasi-criminal matters before all levels of courts

2. Represent the Crown in the conduct of criminal and quasi-criminal appeals before all levels of courts

3. Provide legal advice and assistance to the police and provincial law enforcement officers at their request

- Maintain the core responsibility of the service to provide professional prosecutorial services.
- Conduct prosecutions at all levels of court in trial and appeal proceedings.
- Enhance efforts to evaluate the quality of public prosecutorial services to ensure that the high degree of quality is maintained and improved by implementation of the Crown Attorney Performance Evaluation System developed in 2002–03.
- Provide continuing education to full-time and per-diem Crown attorneys and support staff through internal and external educational opportunities in order to enhance the level of expertise within the service, which will contribute to the provision of professional prosecution services. Training opportunities identified and recommended by the Education Committee will be facilitated where financially viable; however, training in the following areas is deemed critical:
    - Youth Criminal Justice Act
    - Prosecution Information Composite System (PICS)
    - Bill C-15A—An Act to Amend the Criminal Code and other Acts
    - Public Prosecution Service policy training
    - Family Violence Initiative
    - new Crown and per diem training
- Implement a file management information system that allows efficient and effective provision of professional prosecution services, thus avoiding the deficiencies of manual information management practices.
- Complete the computerized Prosecution Information Composite System (PICS)
- Complete implementation of the communications plan in order to enhance community understanding of the role of the service as well as to ensure effective internal communication to support the provision of professional prosecutorial services. Initiatives under these areas include the following:
    - continue funding and circulation of *On the Docket*
    - develop an employee recognition program

- establish a distribution network for the service brochure
- enhance the service's Web site
- provide follow-up media training to Crown attorneys
- provide orientation training to new employees
- complete the informational video

- Continue to provide timely response to requests from police and provincial enforcement officers for advice on particular cases or direction on matters of criminal law.
- Allocate resources to ensure that sufficient staff resources and time are available to respond to requests.
- Develop a service-wide system to capture the extent and frequency of advice

4. Participate in the development of the criminal law and criminal prosecutions policy

- Continue with a strategic planning process that seeks to ensure, now and in the future, that the service will be able to deliver professional prosecutorial services.
- Contribute to the development of criminal law policies and procedures in conjunction with federal and provincial Departments of Justice and liaise with law enforcement agencies, government, the judiciary, and professional associations on policy and procedural matters.
- Participate in joint meetings, including federal/provincial/territorial ministers and deputy ministers meetings, Coordinating Committee of Senior Justice Officials (CCSO) meetings, federal/provincial/territorial Heads of Prosecution meetings, provincial deputy ministers' meetings, and meetings of the Provincial Justice Coordinating Committee.
- Participate in provincial policy initiatives such as the Provincial Forms Committee and restorative justice.

Public Service Commission

Mission

To provide leadership, strategic direction, and expertise in human-resource management to support the development of a strong public service.

Strategic Goals

- Provide leadership and support to ensure strategic human resources planning is part of the strategic priorities and policies of government.
- Improve recruitment and retention policies and practices to maintain a professional and effective public service.
- Improve policies and practices that help us to manage, recognize, and reward performance of public servants who contribute to government's goals and priorities.
- Effectively coordinate collective bargaining processes for the civil service.
- Support the development of employees by offering and encouraging development opportunities.
- Improve policies and practices that promote a healthy and safe work environment and support the well-being of employees.
- Ensure effectiveness and compliance of corporate human resource policies and programs through evaluation and audit.

Core Business Areas

The Public Service Commission's core business areas reflect its mandate as defined in the Public Service Act:

- to lead, advise on, and assist in implementing human resource management policies, programs, standards and procedures.
- to monitor implementation and audit human resource functions across government.
- to advise government on human resource management and collective bargaining in the public service.

1. Leadership and Strategy Development

- Provide strategic guidance to government on human resource management issues and provide policies and strategies aimed at effectively developing the public service through the following:

- research in support of workforce planning, human resource policies, organizational effectiveness, and collective bargaining
- policy development, formulation, and implementation
- strategic and corporate human resource planning
- partnerships with, and policy advice and assistance to, government's human resources community
- advice to the Minister and government on human resource strategies

2. Employee Relations

- Manage the employment relationships for government with its direct employees, including collective bargaining and setting terms and conditions of employment for non-bargaining unit employees.
    - advice to government on collective bargaining in the broader public sector, ensuring fiscal responsibility and accountability within government
    - compensation (including salaries and benefits) and classification
    - union/management consultation
    - collective bargaining/employee relations

3. Programs and Services

- Focus on recruiting, developing, and retaining skilled and effective public servants through the following key human resource programs and services:
    - Staffing and Executive Recruitment
    - Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
    - Training and Development
    - Performance Management
    - Disability Management
    - Occupational Health and Safety
    - Diversity Management
    - Succession Planning

4. Evaluation and Audit

- Improve the design, delivery, and accountability of corporate human resource policies and programs, through consultation with the human resources community and other stakeholders:
    - ensure accountability for the effectiveness of and compliance with human resource programs and policies

  - obtain accurate, objective, evidence-based information to support effective decision making on programs and policies
  - assess the relevance and effectiveness of policies and programs, including an assessment of risk and alignment with departmental and government-wide priorities.

Priorities for 2003–2004

1. Leadership and Strategy Development

- We will complete the implementation of the recommendations of the New Directions and Opportunities Report, as outlined in the Commissioner's response to the report in January 2003. This will involve the following:
  - structural and cultural changes within the Public Service Commission (PSC)
  - a definition of human resource roles and responsibilities of the PSC, the human resource community in government, and managers in departments and offices
  - promotion of good human resources management by line managers.
- Effective workforce planning is needed to ensure that key positions in government are filled by qualified workers. We will develop a corporate succession management strategy that focuses on youth recruitment, development of feeder groups for key management positions, and increased use of the electronic medium to support recruitment and training and development.

  Recruitment efforts will focus on areas of high need, including executive leadership, human resource professionals, finance professionals, and young managers.

  This will include revamping Career Starts, an emphasis on job shadowing for key positions to ensure transfer of corporate knowledge, enhanced skill development for specific professions, and initiatives to provide managers with information and training to carry out their operational responsibilities.
- The General Civil Service Regulations will be reviewed and updated to better correspond to modern employment practices.

- In collaboration with other central agencies, we will develop systems, processes, and tools to support effective internal government-wide communications. This will ensure that employees have the information they need to do their jobs, ranging from details of government news and priorities to training and support information on human resource management.

2. Employee Relations

- We will begin to prepare for collective bargaining for direct employees of government and for corrections employees, whose collective agreements expire during the year.
- We will advise government on collective bargaining issues in the broader public sector, e.g., for Crown corporations and other provincially funded organizations such as school boards and health authorities.
- We will improve, through training, the labour relations knowledge and skills of both managers and the HR community to give them a better understanding of employer obligations and employee rights. This will include training programs for managers that will be incorporated into other training programs.
- We will complete the classification phase of the Management Compensation Project and continue with additional steps toward implementation. The MCP project has been under way for two years.
- We will finish the job evaluation phase of the Civil Service Bargaining Unit Classification Project and continue with additional steps toward implementation.

3. Programs and Services

- We will develop an employee wellness strategy to promote a healthy government workplace. This project will include conducting a workplace environment survey to develop baseline data, promoting healthy lifestyles, and developing a proactive approach to disability management.
- We will continue to use and improve the effectiveness of the performance management strategy to help government deliver on its goals.
- We will train managers to use performance management annually, including the widespread adoption of performance appraisals, to achieve their goals and the goals of government.

4. Evaluation and Audit

- We will continue to build the evaluation and audit function and develop and implement an audit plan to ensure consistent application of human resource policies and procedures across government.

Advisory Council on the Status of Women

Mission

To advance equality, fairness, and dignity for all women in Nova Scotia.

Strategic Goals

The advisory council members have defined the following strategic goals for the work of the agency:

- **Inclusion.** To increase the participation of women in all their diversity in decisions that affect their lives, families, and communities, with particular emphasis on those who face discrimination because of race, age, language, class, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or various forms of family status.
- **Economic equality.** To promote women's economic equality.
- **Elimination of violence against women.** To reduce violence against women in communities, workplaces, and families.
- **Health and Well-Being.** To improve the health and well-being of women and their families.

Key contributions of the Advisory Council on the Status of Women to the overall priorities of government are as follows:

- Through a commitment to the inclusion of marginalized groups, the work of the advisory council supports effective and efficient utilization of government resources. For example, by collaborating on a provincial HIV/AIDS strategy, we ensure that the fact that the fastest-growing rate of infection is among 15- to 19-year-old heterosexual women is addressed through the inclusion of best practices in prevention. Similarly, ensuring that racialized groups are specifically recruited and selected in programs to promote women in trades supports government goals in education and economic opportunity. Overall, the advisory council's recommendations in a wide range of policy areas affecting women ensure that the specific concerns of women can be voiced and taken into account.
- The Advisory Council on the Status of Women promotes the education of women, with a particular focus on trades and technology, where women are under-represented at the same time that serious skills shortages are recognized by business and industry throughout Nova Scotia. Operational plans in this area

include participation in the work of the Nova Scotia Skills Agenda and collaboration with community-based organizations such as the Women's CED Network, Techsploration, and Hypatia.

- The council's work promoting education is closely linked to government priorities in economic development. Additionally, the Advisory Council on the Status of Women takes part in the Sustainable Communities Initiative, works closely with Nova Scotia Women's FishNet, and, at the level of the federal/provincial/territorial Forum of Status of Women Ministers, takes part in strategic planning to promote woman-friendly workplace cultures in high-growth, well-paying occupations.
- The council's work promotes improved health for Nova Scotian women and their families in a number of ways. First, the $1.7-million CIHR-funded Healthy Balance Research Program is now in its third year, and in fiscal year 2003–04, dissemination of research results on the situation of caregivers in Nova Scotia will become available to policy audiences, community groups, and the general public. The council will work to include consideration of women in the province's strategy for HIV/AIDS in fiscal year 2003–04. As well, the council will promote the United Nations Global Campaign against Violence in this province by advocating for a perspective on violence as a public health problem that requires strong prevention initiatives.

Core Business Areas

1. Policy and Research

The council advises the Minister on the concerns and priorities of women; formulates strategies and options to address these; and conducts quantitative and qualitative research in consultation with academic and community groups and government departments to ensure that advice is a feasible, relevant, timely and accurate guide to governmental action.

2. Information and Education

The council collects and disseminates information on women's issues to the Minister, council, staff, and other key stakeholders including the media and the general public. Through a comprehensive communications strategy, the council informs and influences key stakeholders about issues and concerns affecting women, and about council and government priorities, activities, accomplishments, and opportunities for improvement in addressing women's issues.

3. Community Liaison and Rural Outreach

Through its members and the Field Work Program, the council brings forward concerns of women from across Nova Scotia, with particular attention to historically disadvantaged groups and partners with communities and agencies to advance equality for women in programs and services.

Priorities for 2003–2004

1. Policy and Research

- Provide research and policy advice, to both provincial and federal governments, on issues affecting women. Forums and discussion papers to inform policy audiences on options for women's transition to employment; cost-benefits of violence prevention; gender analysis of social inclusion policy; and HIV/AIDS and sexual health services are planned.
- Maintain the council's effectiveness through promoting diversity of council membership and supporting members' active engagement in their communities to enable them to bring forward the concerns of women to relevant policy audiences. Further training to develop skills in working with diversity will be made available to council members and staff.
- Inform and influence public policy through research in such areas as caregiving and unpaid work. The initial results of the Healthy Balance research program will become available and will be disseminated to academic and policy audiences, caregiver groups, and the general public provincially, nationally, and internationally. Updated statistical information on Nova Scotian families and on women's work will be published.

2. Information and Education

- Ensure public awareness of the council's accomplishments and positions through appropriate communications plans and actions; continue to mark International Women's Day, the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, and Women's History Month. It is expected that there will be 50,000+ Web contacts, 300 NewsByte subscribers, 1,200 assistance requests, and at least 25 media contacts.

- Provide timely, accurate, and useful information about matters of concern to women to a wide variety of internal and external audiences. Planned publications include a fourth revised edition of *Making Changes: A Book for Women in Abusive Relationships*, a new publication informing women about the legal implications of living common-law, and a new publication to inform women, educators, business and industry, and relevant policy audiences about policy and program initiatives to attract and retain women in trades.

3. Community Liaison and Rural Outreach

- Increase women's leadership and participation in public affairs through the design and delivery of public information materials and workshops. An updated version of *Votes for Women: A Handbook on Political Skills* will be published. A workshop to increase participation of Mi'kmaq women in band politics will be developed and implemented in partnership with the Office of Aboriginal Affairs.

- Ensure inclusion of women in social and economic development through participation in the Sustainable Communities Initiative, Nova Scotia Skills Agenda, Women's CED Network, Nova Scotia Women's FishNet, and community development policy implementation. Priorities for 2003–04 are to work on sustainable community initiatives in two SCI field team areas (Cape Breton and Annapolis-Fundy); participate in the PEERS-Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Project; and follow up with Nova Scotia Women's FishNet on their Good Policy, Good Health initiative.

Sydney Tar Ponds Agency

Mission

To focus Nova Scotia's efforts in the Muggah Creek watershed clean-up project and to make the most effective use of provincial resources in co-operation with government and community partners.

Strategic Goals

The strategic goals of the Sydney Tar Ponds Agency (STPA) are as follows:

- In the capacity of lead agency for the implementation of a funding agreement between government partners and community stakeholders, implement projects and initiatives in the pursuit of the clean-up of the Muggah Creek watershed at the direction of the Executive Committee.
- On behalf of Nova Scotia, engage government partners in the negotiation of a renewed funding agreement for the clean-up of the Muggah Creek watershed.
- Communicate effectively with the public, both directly and through the media, about steps being taken to clean up the Muggah Creek watershed, and coordinate these communications with affected provincial departments and agencies, other government partners, and other Joint Action Group (JAG) community stakeholders.
- Effectively deploy and coordinate provincial resources in the Muggah Creek watershed clean-up and, where appropriate, the decommissioning of the Sydney Steel plant, in particular through Sydney Environmental Resources Limited (SERL), a Nova Scotia Crown corporation.
- Optimize the working interface between government partners and community stakeholders in the clean-up of the Muggah Creek watershed and Sydney Steel plant.

Core Business Areas

STPA's core business areas are:

1. Management of Contracts

- To oversee management of contracts within the framework of the Muggah Creek watershed clean-up funding agreement between government partners and community stakeholders and in keeping with directives of the Executive Committee responsible for the agreement

2. Communication

- To communicate with the community in a planned, proactive way in the development, evaluation, and implementation of specific clean-up recommendations.

3. Representing Nova Scotia's Interests

- To represent Nova Scotia's interests in the negotiation of a renewed funding agreement for the clean-up of the Muggah Creek watershed.

4. Optimizing the Impact of Sydney Environmental Resources Limited

- To optimize the impact of Sydney Environmental Resources Limited, a Nova Scotia Crown corporation, on the province's role in the Muggah Creek watershed clean-up process and decommissioning of Sydney Steel plant by supporting the corporation's core business areas.

5. Direct Nova Scotia's Involvement in the Muggah Creek Watershed Clean-up

- To direct Nova Scotia's involvement in the Muggah Creek watershed clean-up in a planned and considered fashion to optimize the impact of the effort and facilitate progress and efficiency.

Priorities for 2003–2004

STPA's priorities for each core business area in the fiscal year 2003–04 are as follows:

1. Management of Contracts

- Actively participate in and facilitate the executive decision-making process as part of the funding agreement between government partners and community stakeholders respecting the Muggah Creek watershed clean-up.
- In the capacity of lead agency, initiate and manage projects for which Nova Scotia has contract responsibility.
- Cause projects to be implemented in a timely manner in keeping with agreed-upon schedules.

2. Communication

- Develop and execute a plan, in co-operation with JAG and government partners, for communicating effectively with the public, both directly and through the media, about steps being taken to clean up the Muggah Creek watershed.
- Take a lead role in deliberations of the Intergovernmental Communications Advisory Group (ICAC) and the Public Education and Participation Working Group (PEP) of JAG.
- Initiate, monitor, and respond to media coverage of issues relating to the Muggah Creek watershed clean-up.

3. Representing Nova Scotia's Interests

- Engage government partners in negotiations for the purpose of producing a second-generation funding agreement for the clean-up phase of the Muggah Creek watershed.

4. Optimizing the Impact of Sydney Environmental Resources Limited

- Foster frequent and regular internal communications between SERL, STPA and Sydney Steel Corporation.
- Interface with the Board of Directors, SERL, and SYSCO.
- Guide SERL in its core business areas.
- Facilitate coordinated planning between SERL, SYSCO and STPA.

5. Direct Nova Scotia's involvement in the Muggah Creek watershed clean-up in a planned and considered fashion

- Foster frequent and regular internal communication through the implementation of a new developed broadly based communications plan.
- Facilitate strategic planning to ensure effective provincial input.
- Encourage regular internal reporting.
- Advance strategic and timely recommendations to key government decision makers.

Treasury and Policy Board

Mission

To ensure that the expenditure and policy initiatives of the public service are planned, communicated and implemented in a way that reflects the priorities of government and inspires confidence in the people of Nova Scotia.

Strategic Goals

- Provide high-quality analysis and recommendations to the Executive Council and Treasury and Policy Board.
- Improve communication between elected officials and the public service, including Crown corporations and other government agencies.
- Improve accountability of government and the public service, including Crown corporations, and other government agencies.
- Strengthen the corporate leadership of the public service.
- Promote the implementation of government's strategic plan through the improved integration of planning, budgeting and communications.
- Improve systems, processes and procedures required for effective and efficient administration of government.

Core Business Areas

1. Support to Treasury and Policy Board/Cabinet

- Managing submissions to and follow-up from Cabinet and the Treasury and Policy Board, developing the TPB agenda and providing a critical analysis of policy and expenditure proposals to the Executive Council and Treasury and Policy Board as background to the decision-making process.

2. Strategic Planning and Budgeting

- Assisting the Executive Council in developing and communicating corporate priorities; developing and implementing processes to link allocations of funds with policy direction and priorities; and analysing and advising on department and agency budgets to ensure that allocations and reallocations support priorities, suggesting corrective action when necessary.

3. Coordination of Corporate Policies and Priorities

- Identifying major policy issues, facilitating collaborative policy development on issues that cross departmental boundaries, and initiating, and sometimes leading, corporate projects.

4. Supporting Effective Corporate Administration of Government

- Developing and communicating guidelines and standards for administration of government, advising on government structure and programs, and supporting senior leadership development.

Priorities for 2003–2004

1. Support to Treasury and Policy Board/Cabinet

- Evaluate the quality and methods of the staff support to Cabinet/TPB and its sub-committees and make improvements as required.
- Support the work of the Legislation Committee by identifying policy issues that should be referred to Cabinet/TPB for review and decision and providing advice on the draft legislation to ensure that policy objectives are being met

2. Strategic Planning and Budgeting

- Develop a Business Planning, Budget, and Accountability Framework. The framework will explain the linkages between the planning, budgeting, and accountability components of this cycle and describe the purposed role of environmental scanning, operational planning, performance measurement, and evaluation. The corporate framework will be published in the Management Manual, accompanied by a user guide for departments and agencies to explain each component in detail. Training and development plans will be developed, together with communication and implementation plans.
- In collaboration with the other central agencies, lead the development of systems, processes, and tools for improved internal, government-wide communications, such as sharing best "communications" practices, enhancing the government Intranet page, and promoting the use of on-line tools for employees such as Nspire.

3. Coordination of Corporate Policies and Priorities

- Lead the implementation of a revised program inventory and costing methodology. The inventory and costing of programs and services will assist government in measuring effectiveness, economy, and efficiency. This is a two-year project. By March 31, 2004, the program inventory and analysis will be completed.

- Develop an evaluation policy. Evaluation should contribute to government's commitment to greater accountability and continuous improvements in policy, as well as program design and delivery. This is a multi-year project. By March 31, 2004, the policy development process will be in place, and an assessment of government's evaluation capacity and research on best practices on the evaluation of government services will have been completed.

- Lead the development of a policy for the levying of user fees by government departments for the purpose of consistency, fairness, and equity. This is a two-year project. By March 31, 2004, a database of department user fees will be developed and research of best practices for user fee policy and administration will be completed.

4. Supporting Effective Corporate Administration of Government

- Encourage and monitor implementation of the Management Manual Policy. The review of existing and development of new government's administrative policies and procedures is an ongoing process. In 2003–04, the focus will be on raising awareness of the management manuals and encouraging their utilization.

- In collaboration with other central agencies, clarify roles, responsibilities, and interrelationships of these agencies and facilitate the development of closer working relationships.

Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board

Mission

The UARB is an independent quasi-judicial tribunal tasked with the legal responsibility to carry out the mandate assigned to it by government through statute and regulation.

Strategic Goals

- To produce legally correct, timely, and well reasoned decisions for all applications and appeals.
- To maintain a safe and economically strong motor carrier fleet to meet the needs of the travelling public.
- To provide agreed-upon shared support to other agencies, boards, and commissions.

Core Business Areas

1. Quasi-judicial Function

This is the primary function of the board: to exercise the powers of the legislature as delegated by the various statutes. Operations are conducted through the board members and supported with administrative and advisory staff.

2. Motor Carrier (Public Passenger) Administration

This involves the safety inspection, licensing, administration, and enforcement function relating to the public passenger industry and some not-for-profit organizations. Operations are undertaken by the staff of the Motor Carrier Division.

Priorities for 2003–2004

1. Quasi-judicial Function

- Maintain a sufficient number of board members, with an appropriate mix of expertise, in order to effectively carry out the assigned mandate.
- Maintain a support infrastructure sufficient to ensure that hearings and decision making operations are not impaired. This includes ensuring that sufficient advisory and administrative staff are available and that there are adequate hearing and office facilities.
- Maintain essential independence.
- Maintain sufficient administrative capability to satisfy agreed-on support to other agencies, boards, and commissions.

2. Motor Carrier (Public Passenger) Administration

- Maintain current inspection and inspection coordination levels to meet the statutory requirement to inspect all public passenger vehicles twice annually.
- Maintain sufficient enforcement capability to be able to respond to complaints.
- Update the 13-year-old computerized licensing system in order to minimize costs associated with licensing administration, provide inspection staff with accurate and timely information critical to their activities, and avoid failure due to technological obsolescence.
- Integrate previously unregulated van operations into the licensing and safety inspection programs. Increase inspection capability sufficient to satisfy inspection demands.
- Maintain current minimum staffing for administration of licensing and renewal.
- Review existing procedures regarding inspections and business processes to ensure maximum efficiencies are realized.

Voluntary Planning

Mission

To measurably improve the social and economic well-being of all Nova Scotians by providing the Premier and Cabinet with valuable volunteer and citizen-based advice on relevant policy issues for today and for the future.

Strategic Goals

- Improve quality of life for Nova Scotians.
- Contribute to enhanced government policy and legislation.
- Ensure direct citizen participation in policy development.
- Address long-term priorities—uniquely.
- Provide value and relevance to government and citizens.

Core Business Area

Voluntary Planning has a single core business, that being to enhance democracy and improve the quality of life for Nova Scotians by engaging knowledgeable volunteer members and citizens in the formulation of policy advice to the Premier, Cabinet, and departments.

Priorities for 2003–2004

Voluntary Planning's single core business is carried out operationally in three distinct ways:

Major Task Forces

In recent years, Voluntary Planning has accepted major projects assigned by the provincial government. The Fiscal Management Task Force and, more recently, the Non-Resident Land Ownership Task Force are two examples.

In both cases, Voluntary Planning recruited a committee of knowledgeable volunteers to thoroughly research the subject, give all Nova Scotians an opportunity to provide input and comment, and produce their best advice in the form of recommendations.

This is an extremely effective way to reach sound and broadly accepted strategies on complex public policy issues. The Voluntary Planning process considers the long-term benefit of the entire province and takes full advantage of the opportunity to increase public knowledge and awareness on the issue at hand. At the time of writing, Voluntary Planning has been strongly encouraged to investigate the topic of Population Dynamics within Nova Scotia. As review on this subject evolves, it is possible that a major proposal may be forthcoming in 2003–04, making Population Dynamics a VP priority for some time.

Sectors

To fulfil Voluntary Planning's promise as a valuable and influential contributor to policy making in Nova Scotia, the board of directors relies heavily on the advice provided by six teams of senior policy advisors, known as sectors.

Led by the chairperson, each member will contribute to an environmental scanning process and participate in discussions resulting in prioritized policy briefings or proposals. A major emphasis for each sector will be a regular presentation to the board, at which time they will bring forward their most important and pressing priorities from their societal sphere of interest.

These priorities, depending on mutual discussion between the VP board and Cabinet, may emerge as major project topics or may be forwarded as advice to ministers. Individual sectors, with board agreement, may participate in special projects of their own design while still carrying out their other responsibilities.

Direct Advice

On occasion, the Voluntary Planning Board, or other volunteers as assigned, is asked to provide advice directly to the Premier or other senior government representatives. This service normally would not involve consultation beyond the board members or the set of volunteers engaged for the purpose.